Men-at-Arms

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World War II Soviet Armed Forces (2)

1942–43

Dr Nigel Thomas • Illustrated by Darko Pavlovic

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Series editor Martin Windrow

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WORLD WAR II SOVIET ARMED FORCES (2)

1942–43

By August 1941, Stalin held all the key military and political posts at the head of the Soviet Union's power structure; nevertheless, it was 6 March 1943 before he had himself appointed to the rank of Marshal of the Soviet Union – his first military rank. Here he wears the M43 general officers' peaked service cap and khaki greatcoat, with a combined-arms red cap band and collar patches, and his rank insignia on gold braid shoulder-boards. (Author's collection)

THE LONG COUNTER-ATTACK

The Nazi-Soviet Pact of August 1939 had allowed the Soviet Union to regain most of the territory conceded during the Russian Civil War. By 1941 the Soviet Union consisted of 15 Soviet Socialist Republics (SSRs), comprising the Russian Empire as it had existed before 1917, and also the western Ukraine, which had never been Russian. However, the Winter War against Finland (November 1939–March 1940) had exposed the numerically huge Red Army as poorly equipped and incompetently commanded; despite Russia's reoccupation of much Finnish territory, that country remained unconquered.

Encouraged by the revelation of Soviet military unpreparedness, Germany and its European Axis allies launched an unprovoked attack on the Soviet Union on 22 June 1941. By January 1942 the Axis had forced the Red Army back 450 miles, and had occupied six SSRs – Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Moldova, Byelorussia (Belarus) and Ukraine. Axis forces were threatening Leningrad (now St Petersburg) and Moscow, and were poised to wheel southwards towards the economically vital oilfields of the Caucasus.

The two years described in this volume (January 1942 to December 1943) saw the Soviet Union recovering – slowly, and at great cost – from the catastrophic defeats of 1941.[1] Leningrad and Moscow had been successfully defended, and the Axis advance had been halted in western Russia. By December 1942 the Axis advance to the Caucasus had been stopped on the Georgian border; most of the oilfields were saved, and the winter of 1942–43 proved to be the turning-point in the war. The Germans' defeat at Stalingrad in February 1943, and the failure of their July counter-offensive on the Kursk salient, heralded a steady Axis retreat, as the now better-equipped and better-led Red Army began its own relentless advance westwards. By December 1943 the Caucasus, eastern Ukraine and most of western Russia were back in Soviet hands, and eventual German defeat seemed increasingly likely.

The Western Allies recognized from the outset that the defeat of the Soviet Union would seriously compromise the Allied cause. Under the United States Lend-Lease Act of 11 March 1941, large quantities of US, British and Canadian aircraft, armoured and other vehicles, radio equipment, weapons, ammunition and clothing were transported to the Soviet Union between 1 October 1941 and 2 September 1945, via British sea convoys to Murmansk and Arkhangel'sk, and US Pacific convoys to Vladivostok. Furthermore, British forces and the Soviet Transcaucasian

1 The separation of this subject into three volumes by date cannot be pedantically consistent in respect of organization, operations, and uniform practice alike, for reasons of relative space. Some examples of 1940 and 1941 uniform and insignia regulations described in this text are also illustrated in the first volume, MAA 464; and the uniform regulations of January 1943, of which some examples are illustrated in this book, will be covered in the text of the forthcoming third volume.

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A Red Army infantry section fighting in the ruins of Sevastopol, June 1942. They wear the summer field uniform comprising the M40 helmet, M41 field shirt and trousers, with puttees and ankle boots. They carry blanket-rolls across their right shoulders in place of backpacks, and are armed with Mosin Nagant M1891/30 rifles and PPSh-41 sub-machine guns. (Courtesy Central Museum of the Armed Forces, Moscow, via Nik Cornish)

Front occupied Iran (Persia) on 25 August 1941, thus creating a 'Persian Corridor' that allowed the British to transport aid overland from British-occupied Iraq to Soviet Azerbaijan. Stalin accepted all available aid, but never publicly acknowledged its vital contribution to the Red Army's eventual victory.

THE SOVIET HIGH COMMAND

Stalin consolidated his position as Chairman of the Communist Party and chief executive of the Soviet Union by controlling the four key organizations that governed the USSR. He chaired the Council of People's Commissars (*Sovnarkom*) from 6 May 1941, and the People's Commissariat for Defence from 19 July 1941. He established the State Committee for Defence (*Gosudarstvenniy Komitet Oborony* – GKO) on 30 June 1941 to ensure military-civilian liaison; and he commanded Red Army General Headquarters, established 23 June 1941 and redesignated on 8 August the GHQ of the Supreme High Command (*Stavka Verkhovnogo Glavnokomandovaniya*). Comprising the state's top military, internal security and political leaders, this 'Stavka' effectively ran the Soviet war effort. On the date of its creation Stalin had himself appointed Supreme High Commander (*Verkhovnnyy Glavnokomandushchiy*).

Stalin appointed *General Armii* (*Marshal Sovetskogo Soyuza,* 18 January 1943) Georgiy K. Zhukov, the Red Army's most able general, as Deputy Supreme High Commander (*Zamestitel' Verkhovnogo Glavnokomandushchego*) on 26 August 1942. This made Zhukov the highest-ranking Red Army officer, and Stalin's right-hand man. Under him, Stavka controlled the Red Army General Staff; the chief of the general staff from 29 July 1941, *Marshal Sovetskogo Soyuza* Boris Shaposhnikov, was replaced 9 May 1942

An increasingly common sight after the Soviet victory at Stalingrad in February 1943: a determined Red Army soldier, wearing a khaki M43 winter field shirt and brandishing a PPSh-41, leads a crowd of exhausted German prisoners to the rear. German POWs could expect brutal treatment in NKVD-run prison camps, and the last survivors were not repatriated until October 1955. However, Soviet prisoners – especially Russians – could expect even worse treatment in German camps, where they were not only denied the protection of the Geneva Conventions, but were allowed to starve to death in huge numbers. (Tschakov Collection)

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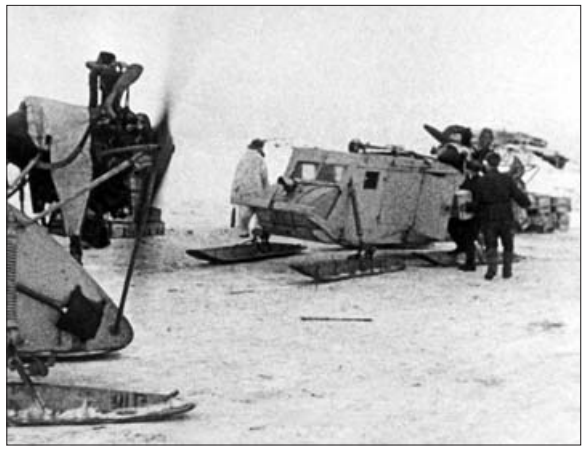
by his deputy, *General-Polkovnik* (16 February 1943, *Marshal Sovetskogo Soyuza*) Aleksandr Vasilevskiy. Zhukov and Vasilevskiy forged a successful partnership that brought important victories.



A group of NKL-16 *Aerosani* snowmobiles patrolling the supply lines across Lake Ladoga to besieged Leningrad early in 1942. These propeller-driven vehicles on skis were used for reconnaissance, raiding, communications, mail delivery, medical evacuation and border patrols. The small snowmobile battalions were assigned to the HQ troops of a field army. Each battalion had only 100 men, with 30 combat and ten transport snowmobiles, in three companies each of three platoons. (Courtesy Central Museum of the Armed Forces, Moscow, via Nik Cornish)

RED ARMY LAND FORCES

1 January 1942–31 December 1943

Lenin's 'Workers' and Peasants' Red Army' (RKKA) had been redesignated in September 1939 as simply the Red Army (*Krasnaya Armiya* – KA), still divided into the Land Forces (*Sukhoputnye Voyska*) and the Air Force.

All males aged 18–50 were liable for military service until the end of the war. Non-commissioned officers were trained at their unit's Regimental School, with re-enlisted NCOs filling the higher ranks. An 18-year-old appointed an officer cadet (*kursant*) was sent to a branch-specific Military College for training, abbreviated in wartime to just 4–10 months, before being commissioned as a *mladshiy leytenant*. Promising captains and majors could attend a branch-specific Military Academy before further promotion.

Women had served in the Red Army and Air Force as volunteers before the outbreak of war, but in June 1941 female conscription was introduced. By May 1945 some 800,000 women had served, constituting 25–30 per cent of total personnel (although relatively few reached commissioned rank). Initially they served in the Supply and Administration and Medical services, but significant numbers later fought as snipers, machine gunners, tank crew members, aircrew and paratroopers in the Air Force, and partisans in the occupied territories.

Land Forces branches

The Red Army (excluding the Air Force) was reorganized from **7 May 1940** into six combat arms. The Infantry and Cavalry were grouped into a single 'Combined Arms' branch; the Technical Troops were reorganized, retaining the Services but separating Technical Officers into a Technical Service with Artillery, Tank and Air Force Engineering branches.

Combined Arms Infantry: Rifle Regts, Mechanized Bns, Motorized Rifle ('Motor Rifle') Regts/Bns, Mountain Rifle Regts, Ski Bns, Machine-Gun Bns, Sub-machine Gun Bns/Coys, Anti-Aircraft (AA) Machine-Gun Bns/Btys/Coys, AA Rifle Coys, Anti-Tank (AT) Rifle Coys.

Combined Arms Cavalry: Cavalry Regts, Cossack Regts, Mountain Cavalry Regts, Reconnaissance Bns/Coys (Sqns).

Armoured Troops: Tank Regts/Bns/Coys, Armoured Car Reconnaissance Bns/Coys, Snowmobile Bns, Armoured Train Bns, Motorcycle Regts/Bns. Armour Engineering Service (formed 8 March 1942).

Artillery: Super-Heavy Artillery Regts, Heavy Artillery Regts/Bns, Field Artillery Regts, Howitzer Regts, Self-propelled Regts, Rocket-Launcher Regts/Bns, AA Regts/Bns/Btys, AT Regts/Bns/Btys, Artillery-Mortar Regts, Horse/Motorized Heavy Mortar Bns, Mortar Regts/Bns, Horse Artillery Bns, Cossack Artillery Bns, Searchlight Regts. Artillery Engineering Service (formed 4 March 1942).

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Table 1: Red Army Fronts and Armies, 1 January 1942 to 31 December 1943

Front	Strategic Operations	Constituent Armies
GHQ Strategic Reserve (RVGK)	Various	21, 24, 27, 39, 43, 46, 57, 60, 1G, 2G, 4G–6G, 8G, 1S, 3T–5T
Northern Theatre		
Karelian	Karelia	7, 14, 19, 26, 32, 2CE, 7A
Leningrad	Leningrad	4, 23, 42, 55, 67, 13A
North-Western (20.11.1943 disbanded)	Demyansk, Velikiye Luki	11, 22, 27, 33, 53, 67, 3S, 4S, 1T, 6A
Volkhov (23.4.1942 disbanded; 6.1942 re-formed)	Leningrad	4, 8, 54, 2S, 14A
Kalinin (10.1942 1st Baltic)	Rzhev-Vyazma, Smolensk	5, 10, 22, 29–31, 39, 59, 68, 10G, 4R, 3S, 3A
Baltic (formed 10.1943; 10.1943 2nd Baltic)	–	22
Central Theatre		
Western	Rzhev-Vyazma, Orel, Smolensk	3, 5, 11, 16, 20, 21, 30, 33, 41, 49, 1CE, 11G, 1A
Central (2.1943 re-formed; 10.1943 Byelorussian)	Kursk, Orel, Chernigov-Poltava	3, 10, 13, 50, 61, 70, 3CE, 4GT, 3T, 16A
Bryansk (10.10.1943 disbanded)	Voronezh-Voroshilovgrad, Voronezh-Kharkov, Orel	3, 11, 38, 48, 63, 4CE, 6CE, 3R, 3T, 2A, 15A
Southern Theatre		
Voronezh (20.10.1943 1st Ukrainian)	Voronezh-Voroshilovgrad, Voronezh-Kharkov, Kharkov, Kursk, Belgorod-Kharkov, Chernigov-Poltava, Kiev	6, 18, 27, 40, 47, 52, 53, 69, 7G, 3GT, R,
Reserve (6.4.1943 formed; 9.7.1943 Steppe; 20.10.1943 2nd Ukrainian)	Kursk, Belgorod-Kharkov, Chernigov-Poltava, Lower Dnieper	13, 27, 47, 61, 7G, 5GT
South-Western (12.7.1942 disbanded; 22.10.1942 re-formed; 20.10.1943 3rd Ukrainian)	Voronezh-Voroshilovgrad, Stalingrad, Voronezh-Kharkov, Kharkov, Donbass, Lower Dnieper	6, 12, 21, 38, 40, 63, 64, 1G, 3G, 2R, 1T, 8A, 17A
Southern (28.7.42 disbanded; 1.1.1943 re-formed; 20.10.1943 4th Ukrainian)	Voronezh-Voroshilovgrad, North Caucasus, Donbass, Lower Dnieper	9, 12, 18, 24, 28, 37, 44, 51, 65, 8CE, 9R, 4A
South-Eastern (formed 7.8.1942; 28.9.1942 Stalingrad; 1.1.1943 Southern)	Stalingrad	28, 51, 5CE, 7CE
Stalingrad (12.7.1942; 9.1942 Don; 2.1943 Central)	Stalingrad	21, 24, 62–66, 1R, 5R, 7R, 8R, 4T, 16A
Caucasus Theatre		
Caucasus (28.1.1942 Crimean; 20.5.1942 North Caucasus; 1.9.1942 absorbed into Transcaucasus)	North Caucasus	9, 18, 44, 47, 51, 56, Coastal, 8–10 CE, 5A
Transcaucasus (formed 15.5.1942)	North Caucasus	9, 45, 46
North Caucasus (formed 24.1.1943; disbanded 20.11.1943)	North Caucasus, Novorossiysk-Taman.	58, Coastal, 10R, 5S
Far Eastern Theatre		
Transbaikal	–	17, 36, 12A
Far Eastern	–	1RB, 2RB, 15, 25, 35, 1C, 9–11A

Abbreviations:
A = Air Army; C = Cavalry Army; CE = Construction Engineer Army; G = Guards Army; GT = Guards Tank Army;
R = Reserve Army; RB= Red Banner Army; S = Shock Army; T = Tank Army.

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Engineers: Engineer Bns/Coys, Mounted Engineer Bns, Electrical Engineer Maintenance Bns, Ordnance Bns, Pontoon Engineer Bns, Construction Engineer Regts, Road Maintenance Engineer Bns/Coys.
Signals: Signal Regts/Bns/Coys.
Technical Troops: Motor Transport Bns/Coys; Military Transport and Railway Troops; Chemical Troops – Flamethrower Bns and Chemical Coys.
Services: Supply and Administration Service Ammunition and Supply Columns; General Technical Service (formed 28 January 1942), from which the Artillery Engineering Service was formed 4 March 1942; Medical Service Bns and Field Hospitals; Veterinary Service Hospitals.
Specialist Officers: Legal Officers, Bandmasters, Political Officers. The latter were reassigned from 9 October 1942 as unit commanders' administrative deputies; this underlined their loss of their former status as co-commanders, which had had many disastrous consequences in 1941.

An assault engineer from a flamethrower company, carrying an LPO-50 flamethrower with triple fuel and propellant tanks on his back as he advances under cover during street fighting in late 1943. A flamethrower battalion was an army-level asset, and a flamethrower company also formed part of an assault engineer-sapper brigade among an army's HQ troops. (Author's collection)

Penal units

These were formed from July 1942, for Red Army personnel sentenced for desertion or cowardice, former prisoners-of-war (who were held to have 'disobeyed orders' by surrendering), and former military or civilian prisoners from *Gulag* labour camps. A Penal Battalion (*Shtrafny Bataljon*, abbreviated *Shtrafbat*) had 800 men, reduced to 360 from 26 November 1942, all demoted to private, and commanded by a picked Red Army field officer; a Penal Company (*Shtrafnaya Rota*) had 150–200 men commanded by the toughest NCOs. By December 1943 there were about 80 penal battalions, numbered in the 1–76 series with gaps and repetitions or no number, mostly assigned to a Front or Army HQ; plus about 850 penal companies numbered in the 1–612 series, assigned to armies or divisions. By May 1945 some 427,910 men had served in penal units. A 'penal soldier' (*shtrafnik*) served for one to three months, reduced if he were wounded or decorated for bravery, but many soldiers did not survive.

The eight-man crew of a 122mm M38 howitzer prepares to fire in November 1942; the men are wearing M42 fleece caps and M35 greatcoats with minimal equipment. The 122mm was the standard heavy howitzer equipping divisional and army-level artillery units throughout the war. (Courtesy Central Museum of the Armed Forces, Moscow, via Nik Cornish)

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ORGANIZATION OF LAND FORCES

Military Districts and Strategic Directions

There were 18 Military Districts before June 1941, but four – Baltic Special, Orel, Kharkov and Odessa, all under enemy occupation – had been disbanded by September 1941. Five districts were transformed into Fronts: Byelorussian Special (became Western Front), Kalinin (Kalinin), Kiev Special (South-Western), Leningrad (Northern) and Transcaucasian (Transcaucasian). This left nine districts: Arkhangel'sk, Moscow, North Caucasus, Central Asia, Ural, Volga, Siberian, Transbaikal and Far Eastern. As the Axis forces retreated, Steppe Military District was formed on 9 July 1943 from Central Asia District. Kharkov District was re-formed in September 1943, Kiev and Byelorussian in October 1943.

Of the four Strategic Directions abolished in August–September 1941, South-Western was re-formed in November 1941 under Marshal Timoshenko, to confront the Axis advance to the Caucasus, but was abolished again in May 1942.

Fronts

The *Front* or army group, under a general officer ranking from *general armii* down to *general mayor,* was the largest strategic formation. The number of fronts increased from 13 in December 1941 to 20 in late 1943, although most had undergone a second 'formation' or several redesignations. Stavka also retained a GHQ Strategic Reserve (RVGK) for emergency deployment. In October 1943, several fronts were reorganized as numbered 'Baltic', 'Byelorussian' and 'Ukrainian' Fronts, to give the propaganda impression that these nations were liberating their own territories without Russian assistance. The fronts can be divided into five operational theatres:

(1) Northern Six fronts: one (Karelian) fighting in the Arctic and Karelia, five (Leningrad, North-Western, Volkhov, Kalinin/1st Baltic, later Baltic/2nd Baltic) defending Leningrad and threatening the Baltic states.

(2) Central Three fronts defending Moscow and its flanks: Western, Central/Byelorussian (formerly Southern theatre), and Bryansk.

(3) Southern The critical theatre, with six fronts defending Stalingrad and its flanks: Voronezh/1st Ukrainian, Reserve/Steppe/2nd Ukrainian, South-Western/3rd Ukrainian, Southern/4th Ukrainian, South-Eastern/Stalingrad/Southern (reassigned to Central theatre in February 1943), and Stalingrad/Don/Central.

(4) Caucasus Three fronts, defending the Caucasus: Caucasus/Crimean/North Caucasus, North Caucasus, and Transcaucasus.

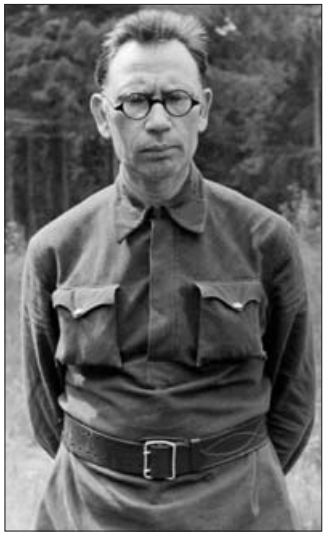
(5) Far Eastern Two fronts, defending the Soviet Far East from a possible Japanese attack, and providing reinforcements for the West: Transbaikal, and Far Eastern.

Armies

The field army (*armiya*), under a *general leytenant* or *general mayor*, was the basic strategic formation. There were 71 armies (numbered 1 & 2 Red Banner, 3–70, and Coastal), with 64 in the West and seven in the Far East. Many armies were reorganized as second or third formations, or promoted to élite Guards or Shock Army status.

The M41 Army usually comprised Army HQ Troops including three regiments (replacement, construction engineer, and signals), and 12–14 battalions (two reconnaissance, security, two engineer,

***General-Leytenant* Andrey Vlasov, his dejected expression suggesting that the photo was taken immediately after his capture by German forces on 12 July 1942 during the destruction of his 2nd Shock Army. He might have been wearing this plain khaki M35 *gymnastiorka* field shirt and M32 officers' belt to disguise his identity, but even when he became the leader of the German-sponsored Russian Liberation Army in spring 1943 he preferred to wear military uniform without rank insignia. (Nik Cornish/Stavka Collection)**



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road maintenance engineer, ordnance, two–four motor transport, chemical, flamethrower, and penal); plus one–three corps. After July 1943, army-level artillery included mixed artillery brigades, and AA, AT, mortar, rocket-launcher, and self-propelled (SP) artillery regiments, and armies also had independent tank regiments. From 1943, engineers were formed into assault engineer-sapper brigades from Front HQ or GHQ Reserve, for special demolition, bridging or assault missions. An Assault Engineer-Sapper Brigade (*Shturmovaya Inzhenerno-Sapernaya Brigada*) comprised four to five engineer-sapper battalions, plus flamethrower, motorized engineer, reconnaissance, and light transport companies. Also at army level, 62 armoured snowmobile (*aerosani*) battalions were formed in January 1942 for action on frozen ground and lakes, but by December 1943 these had been reduced to 57.

Twelve Guards tank corps were formed from December 1942 onwards. Here, *General Armii* Nikolai Fedorovich Vatutin, commanding Voronezh Front (centre), decorates *General-Mayor Tankovykh Voysk* Andrei Grigorovich Kravchenko (left), the commander of 5th Guards Tank Corps, during the battle of Kursk. Vatutin – who was killed by Ukrainian UPA nationalist guerrillas in February 1944 – is wearing M43 general officers' service uniform, while Kravchenko wears the field uniform with an M42 Guards breast badge. Behind Vatutin (right) stands the political commissar *General-Leytenant* Nikita Sergeyevich Krushchev – Stalin's successor as Soviet leader (1953–1964) was a native of Kursk. (Courtesy Central Museum of the Armed Forces, Moscow, via Nik Cornish)

Twenty élite armies were formed as 'Guards', 'Shock' or 'Tank' Armies, usually in GHQ Reserve to spearhead assaults. The Guards Army (*Gvardeyskaya Armiya*) was established in August 1942, with up to 12 infantry divisions and tank corps, many of them already Guards formations. Ten armies (numbered respectively 2 Reserve, 1 Reserve, 1 Guards, 24, 66, 21, 64, 62, 30 and 16) had been redesignated as 1–8, 10 and 11 Guards Armies by April 1943. The Shock Army (*Udarnaya Armiya*), introduced in November 1941, had extra tank units; by December 1942, five armies (19, 26, 60, 27 and 10 Reserve) had re-formed as 1–5 Shock Armies. The Tank Army (*Tankovaya Armiya*) was established on 25 May 1942, and 1–5 Tank Armies had formed by July 1942. Each had two tank corps and two rifle divisions (the latter replaced September 1942 by a mechanized or cavalry corps), and by April 1943 had nine supporting artillery regiments: two AT, two AA, two mortar, two SP, and one rocket-launcher.

The veteran 1st Cavalry Army remained on the Far Eastern Front. The 1–10 Construction Engineer Armies were allocated (up to three to a front) to build defensive works, but by October 1942 all had disbanded. The Reserve Army (*Reservnaya Armiya*) was formed by Stavka as an extra strategic reserve; its 1–10 Armies were formed April–July 1942, but soon re-formed as field armies.

Corps: Rifles

All corps-level commands except cavalry had been abolished by July 1941, but the unwieldy absence of any intermediate echelon between a field army HQ and its divisions led to their reintroduction in 1942; 200 corps were formed – almost double the 1941 number – usually under a *general-mayor*.

The Rifle Corps (*Strelkoviy Korpus*) was ordered in early 1942 but was not common until 1943; 67 Rifle Corps HQs were identified by December 1943. Of these, 58 were in field armies (numbered 3, 6–8, 10, 11, 13–17, 19–22, 24, 26–32, 35–42, 44–46, 49–54, 57–59, 61–70, 73, 75, 77, 82, 83 and 89); eight pre-1942 rifle corps were also operating independently (1, 4, 5, 9, 18, 23, 47 and 48). The 26,500-strong M42 Rifle Corps typically

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had four units of Corps HQ Troops (engineer, MG and medical battalions; reconnaissance company), a field artillery regiment, and two to three rifle divisions. 36 Guards Rifle Corps were formed (numbered 1–36), as new or converted rifle or airborne formations, often assigned to Guards and Shock armies. A Guards Rifle Corps (*Gvardeyskiy Strelkoviy Korpus*) contained at least one Guards Rifle Division.

Corps: Tank and Mechanized

Tank corps were reintroduced from 31 March 1942. The 5,603-man M42 Tank Corps (*Tankoviy Korpus*) had no HQ troops, just two tank brigades (40 tanks each) and a three-battalion motor-rifle brigade. An M41 Tank Brigade (*Tankovaya Brigada*) had Brigade HQ troops including an AA battery and supply company, two three-company tank battalions (23 tanks each), and a motor-rifle battalion with mortar, sub-machine gun (SMG), and two rifle companies. The M42 Tank Brigade, introduced July 1942, had a medium and a light tank battalion. An M42 Motor-Rifle Brigade (*Motostrelkoya Brigada*) had Brigade HQ Troops including three battalions (mortar, field artillery, AA) and four companies (reconnaissance, SMG, AT rifle, and supply), plus three motor-rifle battalions.

This organization proved weak, and by December 1942 a tank corps had six main Corps HQ units – a reconnaissance battalion with motorcycle and armoured-car companies, a rocket-launcher battalion, and four companies (mining engineer, fuel transport, two maintenance) – plus three 1,038-man M42 tank brigades (53 tanks each), and a 4,653-man motor-rifle brigade. The M43 Tank Brigade, introduced November 1943, had Brigade HQ Troops including a motorized SMG battalion and AA-MG and supply companies, plus three tank battalions (21 tanks each).

In all, 31 tank corps were formed, numbered 1–31. A Guards Tank Corps (*Gvardeyskiy Tankoviy Korpus*) comprised Guards tank and motor-rifle brigades, and 12 had been formed from December 1942 (original tank corps in brackets): 1 (26), 2 (24), 3 (7), 4 (17), 5 (4), 6 (12), 7 (15), 8 (2), 9 (3), 10 (30), 11 (6) and 12 (16).

However, the tank corps was too small to challenge the German Panzerdivision, and from September 1942 the more powerful 15,581-strong M42 Mechanized Corps were formed. The M42 *Mekhanizyrovanniy Korpus* had 175 tanks with substantial infantry support. Corps HQ Troops included three regiments (SP artillery, AA and AT), five battalions (rocket-launcher, motorcycle, engineer, and maintenance), and two companies (mining engineer, fuel transport), and the corps comprised one motor-rifle and three mechanized brigades. An M42 *Mekhanizyrovannaya Brigada* was organized like a motor-rifle brigade but plus a tank regiment with 39 tanks.

The M43 Mechanized Corps, introduced 1 January 1943, had 15,018 personnel but 204 tanks. Corps HQ Troops now included a mortar regiment, a mixed 25-gun SP artillery regiment (expanded August 1943 to three regiments), an AT battalion (abolished August 1943), and a reserve

Artillerymen of a rocket-launcher regiment of a Guards mortar division loading 132mm *Katyusha* ('Little Katy') rockets onto a BM-13 eight-rail launcher, mounted on what appears to be a Lend-Lease Studebaker 6x6 truck. The *Katyushas* – nicknamed 'Stalin's Organs' by the Germans, from their distinctive noise – delivered a devastating if inaccurate barrage of fire against area targets. The men are wearing summer field uniforms, with the M41 *pilotka* sidecap, M43 field shirt and breeches, puttees and ankle boots, and carry slung M44 carbines and gas mask bags. (Tschakov Collection)

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tank battalion with 20 tanks. The M43 Mechanized Brigade added a mining engineer company, but downgraded the AA-MG unit to a company. In November 1943 the motor-rifle brigade was replaced in the mechanized corps by the M43 Tank Brigade, with Brigade HQ Troops including a motorized SMG battalion, AA-MG and supply companies, and three tank battalions (21 tanks each).

After August 1942, 13 of the old M40 Mechanized Corps (numbered 1–9, 13, 15, 19 and 28) were re-formed. A Guards Mechanized Corps (*Gvardeyskiy Mekhanizyrovanniy Korpus*) only contained Guards brigades; eight had been formed from June 1942 (original mechanized corps, if any, in brackets): 1, 2, 3 (4), 4 (13 Tank), 5 (6), 6, 7 (2), and 8 (3).

Corps: Cavalry and Artillery

There were 19 cavalry corps, of which seven (numbered 1–7) were in existence by December 1941, and 12 (8–19) were established after 6 January 1942. By June 1942, an M42 Cavalry Corps (*Kavaleriyskiy Korpus*) had seven main Corps HQ units (mortar regiment; horse artillery, AT, signal, and training battalions; mounted engineer and supply companies), plus three cavalry divisons. In February 1943 the mortar regiment became a battalion and the horse artillery an AT regiment; in June 1943 a rocket-launcher regiment was introduced, bringing corps strength to 21,000 men. Mounted cavalry proved vulnerable to enemy artillery, armour and air-strikes. By August 1943 six corps had been redesignated Guards cavalry corps, and the others – with the exception of 15th – disbanded. A Guards Cavalry Corps (*Gvardeyskiy Kavaleriyskiy Korpus*) had three Guards cavalry divisions, and seven had been formed by February 1943 (original cavalry corps in brackets): 1 (2), 2 (3), 3 (5), 4 (17), 5 (10), 6 (7), and 7 (8).

In April 1943 the artillery corps (*Artilleriyskiy Korpus*) was established in GHQ Reserve to supervise the artillery divisions, and five were formed (1–5). By June 1943 these were reorganized into seven 'breakthrough artillery corps' (2–8). The 3rd fought at Leningrad in 1943, and five (2, 4, 6–8) at Kursk in July 1943. A Breakthrough Artillery Corps (*Artilleriyskiy Korpus Proryva*) usually comprised three artillery or other divisions.

Divisions: Rifle

Just over 600 infantry divisions of all types existed between 1 January 1942 and 31 December 1943, some undergoing second and third formations after destruction in battle. A division was usually commanded by a *general-mayor* or *polkovnik*.

The M41 (December) Rifle Division (*Strelkovaya Diviziya*), introduced 6 December 1941 with 11,626 personnel, had increased firepower but reduced transport. Its HQ Troops comprised nine units: AT, engineer, signal, and medical battalions; reconnaissance, motor transport, and chemical companies, and an AA battery. There was an artillery HQ for the field artillery regiment (two two-battery battalions), rocket-launcher, horsedrawn heavy mortar, and motorized heavy mortar battalions. Each of three rifle regiments (numbered in the 1–1,392 series) had a Regimental HQ, HQ company (mounted reconnaissance, infantry reconnaissance, engineer, AA, chemical, and flamethrower platoons); mortar battalion (three companies); sub-machine gun, AT rifle, signal, medical, and supply companies; veterinary hospital, repair shop, and supply store; plus three rifle battalions. A Rifle Battalion had an HQ, signal, medical, and

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supply platoons; a heavy MG company (three platoons); and three rifle companies. A Rifle Company had a medical section, and three rifle platoons each with four 12-man rifle sections.

The M42 (March) Rifle Division, 12,725 strong, incorporated small changes. Divisional HQ troops received an AT rifle company, the horsedrawn heavy mortar battalion was abolished, the artillery regiment received a third (understength) battalion, and rifle battalions each received an AT rifle company. This organization was modified each month until the M42 (July) Rifle Division of 28 July 1942, now reduced to 10,393 men. Divisional HQ troops gained an MG battalion; the motorized heavy mortar battalion was divided into regimental HQ heavy mortar companies, and the signal battalion was reduced to a company. Rifle regiment HQs received an AT mortar platoon, and the mortar battalion was dispersed to form battalion HQ medium mortar companies and company HQ light mortar platoons. The battalion AT rifle company was reduced to a platoon, and the rifle section to two NCOs and seven privates.

The M42 (December) Rifle Division was reduced to 9,435 men, and further, to 9,380, on 15 July 1943; but firepower, particularly in SMGs, was enhanced. The divisional HQ AA battery and MG battalion were abolished; infantry regiment HQs lost their AT mortar platoon; rifle battalion HQs received AT platoons, and rifle companies an MG section.

During this period 391 rifle divisions existed: 1–9, 11–19, 21–27, 29–35, 38–42, 44–46, 48–56, 59–67, 69–78, 80–82, 84–95, 97–99, 102–172, 174–189, 191, 193, 195–209, 211–241, 243, 244, 246–301, 303–317, 319–400, 402, 404, 406–409, 411, 413–417, 421, 422 and 443. Thirteen rifle divisions (numbered 424–430, 432, 434–436, 469 and 473) were ordered formed in December 1941–January 1942, but are not counted, as they were renumbered later in January 1942.

The Guards Rifle Division (*Gvardeyskaya Strelkovaya Diviziya*), of which the first formed on 18 September 1941, was later allocated extra units and firepower. In March 1942 Guards infantry regiments received a second sub-machine gun company. In December 1942 the Guards artillery regiment's third battalion achieved full strength, Guards rifle battalions were assigned AT rifle companies, and Guards rifle companies received MG platoons. During this period 98 Guards rifle divisions were formed, numbered 1–98; most had previously been rifle divisions, but 32–41 Guards Rifle Divisions had been 1–10 Airborne Corps.

A group of female partisans on the march in autumn 1942. They wear a variety of headgear, including the M42 fleece cap without badges; the woman at left foreground – probably the leader – wears a white M36 female service beret. Note her M38 *telogreika* quilted jacket and PPSh-40 sub-machine gun; the companion on her left wears the M35 waterproof padded jacket. In all, 27 women partisans would be awarded the gold star of a Heroine of the Soviet Union, but 22 of these awards were posthumous. (Courtesy TASS, via Nik Cornish)

The M41 Mountain Rifle Division (*Gornostrelkovaya Diviziya*) of October 1941 had seven Divisional HQ units: four battalions (AA, engineer, signals, supply, medical) and three companies (motor transport, mounted reconnaissance, AT battery). Divisional artillery comprised a two-battalion howitzer regiment and four two-battalion mountain artillery regiments. The 19 mountain divisions existing in 1941 had been reduced in January 1942 to 14 (numbered 9, 20, 58, 63, 68, 76, 77, 79, 83, 138, 173, 192, 194 and 302). Some re-formed as rifle divisions, and by December 1943 there were only 11 mountain divisions

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(20, 28, 47, 58, 68, 79, 173, 192, 194, 242 and 318), plus the 83rd, re-formed as 128th Guards Mountain Rifle Division (*Gvardeyskaya Gornostrelkovaya Diviziya*) in October 1943.

Divisions: Tank and Motorized

The M41 Tank Division (*Tankovaya Diviziya*) was usually allocated to the M40 Mechanized Corps, and 53 of the 57 divisions had been converted to M41 Tank Brigades by December 1941. The remaining 60th and 112th both disbanded in 1942, leaving 61st and 111th Tank Divisions in the Far Eastern Front.

The M41 Motorized Division (*Motorizovannaya Diviziya*) was assigned to the M40 Mechanized Corps, and 29 divisions were established before the corps-echelon commands were disbanded on 15 July 1941. By December 1943, 25 motorized divisions (1–3 Guards, 15, 44, 69, 81, 95, 103, 106, 109, 139, 163, 198, 202, 204, 205, 208, 209, 213, 216, 219, 220, 236 and 266) had been converted to rifle divisons, leaving just four (36, 57, 101 and 210) as motorized divisions.

Divisions: Cavalry

The M42 Cavalry Division (*Kavaleriyskaya Diviziya*), introduced 6 January 1942 with 4,443 personnel, had seven company-sized Divisional HQ units: engineer, tank (3 tanks), signals, medical, and chemical companies, and ammunition and supply columns. They had a horse artillery battalion, and three mounted cavalry regiments. Each regiment comprised a two-platoon mortar battery and a horse artillery battery, one heavy MG squadron and four mounted squadrons, each of the latter with four rifle and AT platoons. In March 1942, the HQ troops received a motorized AA battery, and later both an engineer squadron and a reconnaissance battalion with mounted and armoured-car squadrons.

The 6,000-strong M43 Cavalry Division was introduced 6 February 1943. It comprised four company-sized Divisional HQ units: reconnaissance, engineer, signals, and an AA-MG battery; a three-company tank regiment; an artillery-mortar regiment (two field-gun and three mortar batteries); and three mounted cavalry regiments. A Cavalry Regiment had a three-platoon mortar battery, an AT battery, and from July 1943 a reconnaissance platoon; plus four mounted squadrons, each with MG, SMG and three rifle platoons.

During 1942–43 a total of 56 cavalry divisions saw action (numbered 4, 7, 8, 10–13, 15, 19, 23–30, 32, 34, 35, 38, 40, 43, 44, 46, 47, 49, 51, 52, 54, 55, 56, 59–64, 66, 68, 70, 72, 73, 74, 76–82, 84, 87, 91, 94 and 116). Additionally, 19 cavalry divisions (numbered 97–115) were formed in December 1941 as Bashkir, Chechen-Ingush, Kabardino-Balkar, Kalmyk, Kyrgyz, Turkmen and Uzbek national units, but suspicions of political unreliability led to their disbandment by January 1943.

At least six cavalry divisions (numbered 15 & 116 Don; 12, 13 & 50 Kuban; and 53 Terek) were recruited from the Cossack communities, and all attained Guards status by 1942. Seven mountain cavalry divisions (numbered 1, 17, 18, 20, 21, 39 and 83) existed in January 1942, but three (1, 17 & 18) were disbanded in 1942, three (20, 21 & 83) converted to Guards cavalry in 1943, and 39th Division converted to plain cavalry in January 1944.

A Guards Cavalry Division (*Gvardeyskaya Kavaleriyskaya Diviziya*) was organized like a cavalry division, and 17 were formed (original division numbers in brackets): 1 (5), 2 (9), 3 (50 Kuban Cossack),

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4 (53 Terek Cossack), 5 (2), 6 (14), 7 (31), 8 (11), 9 (12 Kuban Cossack), 10 (13 Kuban Cossack), 11 (15 Don Cossack), 12 (116 Don Cossack), 13 (83 Mountain), 14 (21 Mountain), 15 (55), 16 (112), and 17 (20 Mountain).

Divisions: Artillery

The M42 Anti-Aircraft 'Division' (*Zenitnaya Artilleriyskaya Diviziya*), established November 1942, totalled only 1,345 men, in four 320-man AA 'regiments' (actually weak battalions), each with three AA batteries; an AA machine-gun battery, and an AA-MG company, totalling 128 guns. The 1,973-strong M43 Division of February 1943 had only 116 guns; it lost an AA regiment and the AA-MG battery but doubled its AA-MG company, and gained a 490-man four-battery AA regiment. By May 1945 there were about 69 AA divisions numbered in the 1–76 series, plus six Guards AA divisions numbered 1–6; they served with field armies, or were assigned to the Western or Moscow Fronts of the *PVO stranyi* home defence force.

The artillery division was intended to concentrate massive firepower during a critical stage in a battle. An M42 Artillery Division (*Artilleriyskaya Diviziya*), established 31 October 1942 and modified 6 December 1942, was a GHQ Reserve formation with 9,214 men, an observation battalion and four brigades: a light brigade with three tank-destroyer regiments (24 guns each), a howitzer brigade with three regiments (20 howitzers each), a field-gun brigade with two regiments (18 guns each), and a mortar brigade with four regiments (20 mortars each). In this period 26 divisions numbered 1–26 were formed. In March 1943 four were redesignated as Guards formations (original numbers in brackets): 1 (1), 2 (4), 3 (8) and 5 (19). A *Gvardeyskaya Artilleriyskaya Diviziya* had the same organization as an artillery division.

In April 1943, the M43 Breakthrough Artillery Division (*Artilleriyskaya Diviziya Proryva*) was introduced; this was organized like the M42 Artillery Division but with a four-battalion heavy howitzer brigade (32 guns), and a four-battalion super-heavy howitzer brigade. This formation could deliver overwhelming offensive and defensive firepower; 15 artillery divisions (numbered 2, 3, 5–7, 9, 12, 13, 15–17, 20, 22, 23 and 25) were converted to this status, leaving seven (numbered 10, 11, 14, 18, 21, 24 and 26) as plain artillery divisions. Four Guards artillery divisions were re-formed as Guards Breakthrough, three with the same numbers (1,3, 5), and the 4th Guards Breakthrough Artillery Division.

The M42 Guards Mortar Division (*Gvardeyskaya Minometnya Diviziya*) was actually a rocket-launcher formation, with two or three M42 Guards mortar brigades and two or three M42 Guards mortar regiments firing the devastating *Katyusha* rockets from truck-mounted launchers. Seven divisions numbered 1–7 were formed, usually being assigned individually to breakthrough artillery corps. Five tank-destroyer artillery divisions numbered 1–5 were formed in May–June 1942 to consolidate some of the M42 tank-destroyer brigades (numbered in the 1–43 series), and were assigned to Front HQs. A brigade had an AT regiment, two AT rifle battalions, mortar, tank, and minelaying battalions, plus an SMG company. There were also a number of M43 eight-battery AT brigades (numbered in the 1–42 series), which were used to great effect at Kursk in July 1943.

Partisans

'Partisan' is an Eastern European – not necessarily communist – term for a guerrilla fighter. On 29 July 1941, Stalin ordered the formation

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of partisan detachments; recruiting was strong amongst ethnic Russians, initially weak amongst Byelorussians and Ukrainians, and always low amongst ethnic Poles, Baltic peoples and other non-Slavs. To co-ordinate activities the Partisan Movement GHQ was established on 30 May 1942 at Stavka, and formed territorial HQs across the Axis-occupied territories. Recruits came from Red Army stragglers, overrun NKVD destruction battalions, and pro-communist or simply patriotic civilians. Units were commanded by military officers, local Communist Party and *Komsomol* youth officials, and later by Red Army and NKVD Internal Troops officers and special forces parachuted behind Axis lines.

Partisan units were usually understrength. The largest type of element was the divisional-status Partisan United Formation (*Partizanske Soedinenie*), with 10,000–19,000 men in about ten partisan brigades, or more rarely in partisan regiments divided into battalions. A Partisan Brigade (*Partisanskaya Brigada*), about 1,000 strong, comprised from three to seven detachments, and a battalion-sized Partisan Detachment (*Partizanskiy Otryad*) had 100–500 men and women in three to four companies, each with three three-section platoons. Total strength grew from 90,000 partisans in 1941 to more than 550,000 in 1943.

A farmer kisses his wife goodbye before leaving for an uncertain future with a local partisan detachment. He wears a civilian cap and coat, and carries a captured Mauser Gew98 rifle. Partisans gathered intelligence, attacked railway lines and carried out low-level local attacks. They contributed significantly to the Soviet war-effort, but their activities exposed local civilians to savage reprisals by German security units. They themselves often treated civilians harshly during their hunts for food and other resources, and the activities of both sides reduced some areas – particularly in Byelorussia, which was significantly depopulated – to medieval wretchedness. (Author's collection)

SUMMARY OF LAND FORCES CAMPAIGNS

North

This theatre was fairly static, with Soviet forces successfully defending Murmansk and Leningrad, but unable to advance westwards.

Battle of the Demyansk Pocket, 8 February 1942–8 March 1943. North-Western Front trapped German troops in Demyansk, and retook Velikiye Luki on 15 January 1943.

Lyuban-Chudovo Offensive, 7 January–30 April 1942. The Volkhov and Leningrad Fronts advanced against Army Group North, but were unable to break the siege of Leningrad.

Leningrad Offensive, 12–30 January 1943 (*Operation 'Spark'*). Volkhov and Leningrad Fronts advanced 40 miles and occupied the south shore of Lake Ladoga, breaking the blockade.

Centre

Rzhev-Vyazma Offensive, 8 January–20 April 1942. Western and Kalinin Fronts advanced 50–150 miles, outflanking Army Group Centre and forcing it back from the Moscow region.

Battle of Kursk, 5–23 July 1943. Voronezh, Central and later Steppe Fronts defended the Kursk Salient against the last German offensive on the Eastern Front, launched by the armoured forces of Army Groups Centre and South.

Orel Offensive, 12–18 August 1943 (*Operation 'Kutuzov'*). Following the defence of Kursk the Central and Bryansk Fronts attacked, retaking Orel, advancing 90 miles, and seizing the initiative from Army Group Centre.

Smolensk Offensive, 7 August–2 October 1943 (*Operation 'Suvorov'*). Kalinin and Western Fronts advanced 150 miles, retaking Smolensk and driving Army Group Centre into eastern Byelorussia.

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One of the most successful Soviet generals, *General-Leytenant* Vasily Ivanovich Chuikov was recognized as the architect of the victory in Stalingrad, where he commanded the 62nd Army. Chuikov developed the tactic of 'hugging the enemy' – keeping Soviet troops too close to Axis lines for the enemy to risk air or artillery attacks on them. Here he wears the M40 general officers' khaki tunic, with three gilt rank stars on his M41 khaki collar patches. He displays two Orders of the Red Banner and one Order of the Red Star, above the 20 Years' Service Medal. (Author's collection)

South

The South was the most active theatre, where eventual victory at Stalingrad was the turning-point of the war.

Voronezh-Voroshilovgrad Defensive, 28 June–24 July 1942. Voronezh, South-Western, Southern and part of Bryansk Fronts were forced back up to 250 miles by Army Group 'B' (formerly South), losing Voronezh but establishing a defensive line on the River Don.

Stalingrad Defensive, 17 July–18 November 1942. The Stalingrad/Don and South-Eastern/Stalingrad Fronts were forced back 90 miles by Army Group 'B' to Stalingrad, where they defended the city from German and Romanian forces.

Stalingrad Offensive, 19 November 1942–2 February 1943 (*Operations 'Uranus', 'Little Saturn' and 'Koltso'*). Some 1.1 million Red Army troops in South-Western, Don and Stalingrad Fronts attacked across the lower Don and south of Stalingrad, trapping German Sixth Army in the city, which was then occupied by Stalingrad Front.

Voronezh-Kharkov Offensive, 13 January–3 March 1943. Co-ordinating with the Stalingrad Offensive, the Bryansk, Voronezh and South-Western Fronts attacked Army Group 'B', advancing 300 miles from the Don to the Donets river, occupying Voronezh, Kursk, Belgorod and Kharkov.

Kharkov Defensive, 4–25 March 1943. Army Group South (formerly 'B' and Don) counterattacked, forcing South-Western and Voronezh Fronts to fall back 90 miles across the northern Donets, abandoning Kharkov.

Belgorod-Kharkov Offensive, 3–23 August 1943 (*Operation 'Rumyantsev'*). Voronezh and Steppe Fronts counterattacked after the defensive victory at Kursk, advancing 100 miles against Army Group South, taking Belgorod, and then advancing into eastern Ukraine to reoccupy Kharkov.

Donbass Offensive, 13 August–22 September 1943. South-Western and Southern Fronts advanced 200 miles against Army Group South through the eastern Ukraine coastal area, occupying Taganrog and the Donbass industrial region and reaching the River Dnieper.

Chernigov-Poltava Offensive, 26 August–30 September 1943. Central, Voronezh and Steppe Fronts advanced 200 miles through eastern Ukraine, taking

This photograph evokes the fighting in the streets of Stalingrad, as a reconnaissance section engages the enemy from a ruined building in July 1942. They are wearing M40 helmets and M41 camouflage smocks and trousers, carry blanket-rolls over their shoulders, and are all armed with PPSh-41 sub-machine guns. (Courtesy RGAKFD, Krasnogorsk, via Nik Cornish)

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Chernigov and Poltava, and forcing Army Group South across the Dnieper.
Lower Dnieper Offensive, 26 September–20 December 1943. Steppe/2nd Ukrainian, South Western/3rd Ukrainian and Southern/4th Ukrainian Fronts advanced up to 200 miles against Army Group South, occupying the left bank of the Dnieper and liberating eastern Ukraine.
Kiev Offensive, 3–13 November 1943. 1st Ukrainian Front advanced 90 miles through northern Ukraine and liberated Kiev.

A weary but triumphant group of soldiers wave a Soviet flag from an apartment-block balcony to celebrate victory in an urban battle. (The photo supposedly shows Don Front troops in Stalingrad, February 1943, but what looks like a PPS-43 sub-machine gun held by the central man might suggest either a rather later date, or – if it is one of the original PPS-42s produced during the siege – a location in Leningrad.) They wear M42 fleece caps and M40 snow-camouflage hooded smocks and trousers, probably over *telogreika* quilted clothing. (Tschakov Collection)

Caucasus

German Army Group 'A' (detached from Army Group South) advanced towards the strategically vital oilfields of the southern Caucasus, but were first halted on the Georgian border, and then driven back.
North Caucasus Defensive, 25 July–31 December 1942. Army Group 'A' advanced through the north-western Caucasus, occupying Maikop oilfields, forcing the North Caucasus and Transcaucasus Fronts to retreat 500 miles to the River Terek, but failing to reach Baku and the other oilfields.
North Caucasus Offensive, 1 January–4 February 1943 (*Operation 'Don'*). The Transcaucasus (ex-North Caucasus), re-formed North Caucasus, and Southern Fronts counterattacked 350 miles northwards, expelling Army Group 'A' from the north-western Caucausus.
Novorossiysk-Taman Offensive, 10 September–9 October 1943. The North Caucasus Front retook the north-western Caucasus, advancing 100 miles, liberating Novorossiysk, and forcing Army Group 'A' to retreat to Crimea.

LAND FORCES UNIFORMS

13 July 1940–5 January 1943

Following the Winter War (1939–40), new dress regulations were issued. General officers were authorized the M40 dress uniform; this was followed in June 1941 by one for other officers, cadets, NCOs and men, which saw limited use. The general officers' M40 peaked (visored) cap bore the M22 red-enamelled badge on two concentric gilt metal rings, while lower ranks retained the M22 badge. General officers wore M40 brass buttons bearing the seal of the Soviet Union, lower ranks M35 buttons. The uniform colour varied from dark brown to greenish-khaki for winter uniforms, and light khaki for summer uniforms. ('M40' refers to items prescribed 7 May 1940 with effect from 13 July 1940 unless otherwise specified.)

Headgear

The general officers' M40 light grey peaked dress cap had a branch facing-colour band with an M40 cap badge, a gold wire chin strap with M40 gilt buttons, and a white cover for summer wear. The general officers' M40 khaki peaked service cap also had a gold wire strap, and their peaked field cap a black patent leather strap. Other officers wore M35 peaked service caps. The officers' M41 khaki peaked field cap, introduced 1 August 1941,

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Table 2: Red Army Orders of Dress, 13 July 1940 to 6 January 1943

General officers	Officers (1) (2) (3)	Non-Commissioned Officers and Men
Dress Uniform (parades and ceremonial occasions)		
M40 peaked dress cap or M40 fleece cap; M40 dress or white tunic or greatcoat; M35 service or M40 dress breeches; riding boots; M40 dress belt.	M35 peaked service cap or M40/42 fleece cap; M41 dress tunic, M35 service greatcoat; M35 breeches; riding boots; M40 dress belt.	M35 peaked service cap or M35 sidecap; M41 tunic, M35 greatcoat; M35/41 field breeches; M35/40 belt (4); marching boots.
Undress Uniform (ceremonial occasions)		
M40 peaked dress cap; M40 dress or white dress tunic; M35 service or M40 dress trousers; shoes.	M35 peaked service cap or M40/42 fleece cap; M41 dress tunic, M35 service greatcoat; M35 trousers; shoes.	M35 peaked service cap or M35 sidecap; M41 tunic, M35 greatcoat; M35/41 field breeches; marching boots.
Winter Service Uniform (daily duties and exercises in formation with troops)		
M40 peaked service cap or M40 fleece cap; M40 service or white service tunic; M40 service greatcoat; M35 breeches; riding boots; gloves; M35 service belt and cross brace.	M35 peaked service cap or M40/42 fleece cap; M35/40 service tunic or M35/41 winter field shirt; M35 service greatcoat; M35 breeches; riding boots; gloves; M35 service belt and cross brace.	M35 peaked service cap or M40/42 fleece cap; M35/41 winter field shirt; M35/41 greatcoat; M35/41 field breeches; marching boots; M35/40 enlisted ranks' belt (4) (5); gloves.
Winter Service Uniform (undress) (meetings off duty, classes, leave, and exercises not in formation with troops)		
M40 peaked service cap; M40 service tunic, M40 service greatcoat; M35 trousers; shoes; gloves.	M35 peaked service cap or M40/42 fleece cap; M35/40 service tunic or M35/41 winter field shirt; M35 service greatcoat; M35 trousers; shoes; gloves; M35 service belt and cross brace optional.	As above. Re-enlisted NCOs also wore the M35 peaked service cap (5).
Summer Service Uniform (daily duties and exercises in formation with troops)		
M40 peaked service cap; M40 service or white service tunic; M40 service greatcoat; M35 breeches; riding boots; gloves; M35 service belt and cross brace.	M35 peaked service cap or M41 sidecap; M35/40 service tunic or M31/41 summer field shirt and trousers; M35 service greatcoat; M35/41 light khaki summer field shirt; M35 breeches; riding boots; M35 service belt and cross brace.	M35 khaki sidecap; M31/41 light summer field shirt; M35/41 greatcoat; M35/41 field breeches; marching boots; M35/40 enlisted belt (4).
Summer Service Uniform (undress) (meetings off duty, classes, leave, and exercises not in formation with troops)		
M40 peaked service cap; M40 service or white tunic; M35 breeches; riding-boots; gloves; M35 service belt and cross brace.	M35 service peaked cap or M41 side-cap; M35/40 service tunic or M31/41 summer or white field shirt; M35 service greatcoat, M35 breeches; with riding-boots or M35 trousers with shoes; gloves. M35 service belt and cross brace optional;	As above.
Winter and Summer Guard Duty Uniform (patrols, standing guard, parades, reporting to a superior)		
-	Helmet, M35 peaked field cap or M41 sidecap; M35/41 winter or M31/41 summer field shirt; M41 field greatcoat; M35/41 breeches; riding boots; gloves; M35 service belt, cross brace and holster, or M32 field belt, supporting straps and holster; officers' field equipment.	Helmet, M40/42 fleece cap or M35 sidecap; M35/41 winter or M31/41 summer field shirt and trousers; M35/41 greatcoat; M35/41 field breeches; marching boots or puttees and ankle-boots; gloves; M35/40 enlisted belt (4) (5); one ammunition pouch.
Winter and Summer Field Uniform (marches, manoeuvres, field exercises, active service)		
Helmet, M41 peaked field cap or M40 fleece cap; M40 tunic or M35/41 field shirt; M40 field breeches; riding boots; gloves; M32 field equipment.	Helmet, M40 peaked service cap, M40/42 fleece cap; M41 sidecap or M38 panama hat; M35/41 winter or M31/41 summer field shirt; M31/38/41 quilted jacket and trousers; M41 field greatcoat; M41 field breeches; riding boots; gloves; M35 service belt, cross brace and holster, or M32 field belt, supporting straps and holster; officers' field equipment.	Helmet, M40/42 fleece cap, M35 sidecap or M38 panama hat; M35/41 light khaki summer field shirt and trousers; M35/41 greatcoat; M31/38/41 quilted jacket and trousers; M35/41 field breeches with marching boots or puttees and ankle-boots; gloves; M35/38 field belt; supporting straps; enlisted field equipment.

Notes: (1) The steel-grey uniform items worn by Armoured Troops were abolished 1 October 1941. (2) The dark blue uniform items worn by the Air Force were abolished 1 October 1941. (3) Cadets wore officers' uniform with some enlisted uniform items. (4) Cadets wore a special leather belt. (5) A Starshina wore an officers' M32/38 belt and cross brace.

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had a cloth chin strap and peak; general officers added khaki M40 buttons and M40 cap badge, and other officers khaki M35 buttons and M22 badge.

The M39 (SSh-39) steel helmet, possibly inspired by the Italian M33, was issued in 1940 with a leather (later cloth) liner fixed by three rivets; it was replaced in 1942 by the M40 with six rivets. Helmets were painted khaki, sometimes with a red-stencilled outline star. The officers' M41 woollen *pilotka* sidecap lost its former branch-coloured piping and star badge-backing from 18 January 1941.

In winter general officers wore the M40 Don Cossack grey lambswool *papachka* cap with the M40 badge, and a gold braid cross on the red cloth crown top. Other officers wore the M40 *shapka-ushanka* cap with the fold-up peak and ear flaps in natural grey fleece (or finer lambswool at their own expense). That for NCOs and men was of artificial grey fleece; it was replaced from 25 June 1942 by the M42 dark grey fleece cap with M41 subdued badge. The M38 cotton *panama* tropical field hat had an M41 subdued cap badge without branch-colour backing.

A veteran *kapitan* battery commander poses pointing to the 'tank kill' stars on his field gun. He wears the M36 *kubanka* Cossack cap – which was also popular with non-Cossacks – bearing the M22 cap badge. His M43 winter field shirt has the gold braid service shoulder boards of the January 1943 regulations (see footnote 1, page 3), with red piping and centre-stripe, four small silver rank stars, but no Artillery branch badge. On his right breast he wears the Order of the Red Star and Order of the Patriotic War, and on his left two Orders of the Red Banner and a campaign medal. (Tschakov Collection)

Tunics and field shirts

The general officers' M40 light grey, closed-collar, pocketless dress tunic had six gilt front buttons; branch-colour piping on the front, collar (with gold braid inner piping) and pointed cuffs; and rhomboidal collar patches and cuff chevrons of rank. The M40 silver-plated sword or dirk was also worn. The officers' M41 khaki dress tunic had five buttons; branch-colour piping on the collar and straight cuffs; and parallelogram collar patches (cadets, standing collars). Enlisted men's dress tunics had standing collars and no piping. This tunic was worn with an M40 brown leather officers' dress belt with brass star buckle, or the enlisted ranks' service belt.

The general officers' M40 khaki (optionally, dark grey) service tunic had five gilt buttons; internal breast pockets with buttonless scalloped flaps; and branch-colour collar and cuff piping. Rank was shown by rhomboidal collar patches, and cuff chevrons. The white summer dress tunic had no collar or cuff piping.

The M35 khaki woollen (in summer M28, later M31, light khaki cotton) *gymnastiorka* field shirt was worn by all ranks with M40 rank insignia, and officers could wear a white unpiped version. M41 winter woollen and summer cotton field shirts with reinforced elbows were introduced from 1 February 1941.

Overcoats

The general officers' M40 light grey double-breasted dress greatcoat had two rows of six gilt buttons; a collar worn open or closed; branch-colour piping to the collar, front, and pointed cuffs (straight, from 1941); internal diagonal waist pockets with flaps piped in branch-colour; and a buttoned rear half-belt. Rank was shown by rhomboidal collar patches, and cuff chevrons. The general officers' M40 dark grey service greatcoat had straight cuffs. Other officers wore the M35 dark grey service greatcoat with M40 rank

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Three artillerymen, posed wearing M40 helmets and M43 winter field shirts and carrying PPSh-41 sub-machine guns. The service shoulder boards are in the black branch colour with red piping; note that of the *mladshiy serzhant* (centre), with two gold braid rank bars and yellow metal crossed-cannon branch badges. All three proudly display their medals, particularly the Order of Glory star; with a ribbon striped in the Imperial Russian colours of orange and black, this was instituted on 8 November 1943 for award to NCOs and men for bravery in the face of the enemy. (Author's collection)

insignia, with two rows of five buttons from 1941, or, from 1 February 1941, a single-breasted khaki greatcoat. Alternatives were the M31 *bekesha* coat, the M31 sheepskin coat introduced 23 December 1931, or the M35 light khaki waterproof double-breasted padded jacket. NCOs and enlisted men wore the M35 mid-grey double-breasted greatcoat with M40 rank insignia, replaced 1 August 1941 by a khaki greatcoat.

In cold weather, personnel also wore the M31 padded cavalry jacket; the M38 *telogreika* quilted jacket with standing buttoned collar – or from 25 August 1941, the M41 model with a turn-down collar – with four brown horn front buttons, two open waist pockets, buttoned cuffs, and parallelogram collar patches of rank. The versatile khaki M38 *plashch-palatka* waterproof hooded cloak could also be used as a groundsheet or a shelter section, with ten forming a tent.

Legwear and footwear

With dress uniform general officers wore M40 light grey breeches with branch-colour piping and stripes, and other officers M41 khaki breeches with branch-colour piping. All breeches were cut in the traditional full-thighed *vatnie sharovari* style. For service dress officers wore M35 navy blue breeches or trousers piped in branch-colour; plain white summer service trousers; or piped or plain M40 khaki breeches. Enlisted men initially wore plain khaki M35 breeches, and from 1 February 1941 all ranks adopted M41 winter khaki woollen and summer light khaki cotton breeches with reinforced knees. Officers and mounted NCOs and men wore black leather riding boots, enlisted men black marching boots, or khaki woollen puttees with black ankle boots. In cold weather all ranks wore high *valenki* felt boots.

Personal **field equipment** was as described in the first volume, MAA 464; see also commentary to Plates G2 & G3.

An infantry platoon listen attentively to instructions in a Russian forest during 1942. Most are wearing M40 fleece caps, and M35 greatcoats or *plashch-palatka* hooded capes over field shirts. (Courtesy Central Museum of the Armed Forces, Moscow, via Nik Cornish)

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Table 3: Red Army Branch Distinctions, 13 July 1940 to 5 January 1943

Branch	Facing colour	Piping colour	Officer collar-patch piping	Brass branch badge on collar patch
Combined Arms general officers	Red	Red	Gold	None
Infantry	Crimson	Crimson (1)	Gold	Crossed rifles on target
Cavalry, Cossacks and Reconnaissance	Blue	Blue (1)	Gold	Horseshoe on crossed sabres
Armoured Troops	Black (2)	Red	Gold	Tank (in pairs, gun facing right)
Motorcycle units	Black (2)	Red	Gold	Motorcycle on cogwheel (pairs)
Armour Engineering Service (8.3.1942)	Black (2)	Red	Gold	Crossed hammer & wrench (pairs)
Artillery	Black (3)	Red	Gold	Crossed cannons
Anti-Tank Artillery	Black (3)	Red	Gold	Crossed cannons; sleeve badge
Artillery Engineering Service (4.3.1942)	Black (3)	Red	Gold	Crossed hammer & wrench (pairs)
Artillery units in other branches	Branch	Branch	Gold	Crossed cannons
Engineer general officers	Crimson	Crimson	Gold	Crossed axes
Engineers	Black	Royal Blue	Gold	Crossed axes
Electrical Engineers	Black	Royal Blue	Gold	Crossed axes on lightning bolts
Pontoon Engineers	Black	Royal Blue	Gold	Crossed axes on sea-anchor
Construction Engineers	Black	Royal Blue	Gold	Crossed pickaxe and spade (pairs)
Construction Engineers in other branches	Branch	Branch	Gold	Crossed pickaxe and spade (pairs)
Signals general officers	Crimson	Crimson	Gold	Red star on wings & lightning bolts
Signals	Black	Royal Blue	Gold	Red star on wings & lightning bolts
Signals units in other branches	Branch	Branch	Gold	Red star on wings & lightning bolts
Technical Troops general officers	Crimson	Crimson	Gold	Crossed hammer & wrench (pairs)
Motor Transport, except with Armour	Branch	Branch	Branch	Winged steering wheel, axle & wheels
Military Transport Service and Railway Troops officers	Black (2)	Royal Blue	Gold	Red star on winged anchor, crossed hammer & wrench; sleeve badge
Railway Troops NCOs & Men	Black	Royal Blue	–	Crossed hammer & wrench (pairs)
Chemical Troops	Black	Black	Gold	Mask on crossed canisters
Chemical units in other branches	Branch	Branch	Gold	Mask on crossed canisters
Supply & Administration general-officers	Crimson	Crimson	Gold	Red star, gold hammer & sickle
Supply & Administration (until 30.3.1942)	Dark green	Red	Red	Helmet, wrench, compasses, tyre, cogwheel
Supply & Administration (31.3.1942)	Dark green	Red	Red	Red star, gold hammer & sickle
Medical Service	Dark green	Red	Red	Chalice & snake (pairs)
Veterinary Service	Dark green	Red	Red	White chalice & snake (pairs)
Technical Service (combat arms)	Branch	Branch	Branch	Crossed hammer & wrench (pairs)
Legal Officers (combat arms)	Branch	Branch	Branch	Shield on crossed swords
Bandmasters (combat arms)	Branch	Branch	Branch	Lyre
Political Officers (combat arms)	Branch	Branch	–	Unit branch-badge; sleeve badge
Air Force and Paratroopers	Light blue	Light blue (1)	Gold	Two-bladed winged propeller
Air Force Servicing Battalions	Light blue	Light blue (1)	Gold	Crossed rifles on target
Air Force Engineering Service (10.4.1942)	Light blue	Light blue (1)	Gold	Red star, winged radial engine, propeller

Notes:
(1) Political officers' and enlisted collar-patch pipings were black.
(2) Black velvet facings for general officers, officers and officer-cadets.
(3) Black velvet facings for general officers.

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Sub-machine gunners of the South-Western Front advance against the Romanian Third Army during Operation 'Uranus', 19–23 November 1942, thus helping to trap Axis forces in Stalingrad. They wear M40 snow-camouflage hooded smocks and trousers over their uniforms. (Author's collection)

Autumn 1942: two artillery-spotters reporting by radio from a forward position. They wear M41 *pilotka* sidecaps rather than helmets, for ease of using earphones, and have been issued with M41 hooded camouflage smocks and trousers in one of the six colour variations of the 'amoeba' pattern. (Courtesy Central Museum of the Armed Forces, Moscow, via Nik Cornish)

Camouflage uniforms

Troops continued to wear M40 white cotton hooded coats, or hooded smocks and trousers, as snow camouflage. From 1941, temperate-season camouflage clothing was also developed for snipers, scouts, reconnaissance troops, motor rifles and assault engineers. This comprised either M41 one-piece buttoned, hooded overalls; a loose, hooded ankle-length coat; or a waist-length hooded smock with a zipped front and drawstring cuffs. Matching trousers had drawstrings at the ankles, and a matching helmet-cover and net face mask might be issued. The so-called *'mochalniy'* type was light green with attached dark green hessian (burlap) strips and raffia-string bunches, specifically intended for snipers. There were also six variations with a base colour printed with 'amoeba'- or 'cloud'-shaped (i.e., irregular, rounded-edge) camouflage patches. This pattern appeared in light green overprinted with dark green patches; dark brown over light green; black over khaki; light brown over grey; dark brown over light brown; and dark brown over white.

Branch-specific uniforms

The M35 light ('steel-') grey service and field uniforms for officers of **armoured troops** were abolished on 1 October 1941, but could be worn until December 1942 (the grey M35 *budyonovka* field cap had been abolished from 5 July 1940). Standard khaki uniforms were worn instead, with the M34 leather or M37 'moleskin' jackets, and tank and other armoured vehicle crews wore the M34 padded tank-crew helmet and M35 overalls.

Mounted cavalry and field artillery officers wore the longer M35 dark grey greatcoat. Cavalry officers still wore the dark blue riding breeches introduced 19 July 1929, the peaked cap introduced 12 January 1929, and the padded jacket introduced 31 January 1931 for cavalry and horse artillery. The M36 ceremonial uniforms of the Terek, Kuban and Don **Cossack** cavalry and horse artillery units were abolished from 1 October 1941, but could be worn until December 1942, and in fact never entirely disappeared. Otherwise standard cavalry uniforms were worn, with black M36 Cossack lambskin caps and M41 subdued cap badges – the low *kubanka* cap for Terek and Kuban Cossacks, and the taller *papachka* for Don Cossacks.

Mountain detachments were issued dark grey windproof clothing, including a double-breasted thigh-length jacket with two rows of five grey buttons, buttoned shirt-style cuffs, and a patch pocket on the left breast and two internal waist pockets, all with squared, buttoned flaps. A waist-length version without waist pockets, and long trousers, were also issued. These were normally worn with the M40 or M42 fleece caps, thick woollen socks, and black mountain ankle boots with metal cleats.

Female personnel were issued clothing buttoning from right to left, but under wartime conditions they often had to wear male garments. On 17 December 1936 a dark blue beret with M22 cap badge had been

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introduced, as were a khaki field shirt and a dark blue woollen or cotton skirt, worn with dark grey stockings and marching boots. In summer a white cotton beret and field shirt were authorized. The M40 fleece cap, M41 *pilotka* sidecap and M41 dark grey greatcoat, introduced 3 August 1941, were also worn. Services personnel were issued from 3 August 1941 a khaki woollen (in summer, light khaki cotton) dress, with four gilt front buttons, turn-down collar with parallelogram collar patches, internal breast pockets with buttoned squared flaps, buttoned shirt cuffs, and khaki integral belt, worn with dark grey stockings and ankle shoes. There was also a double-breasted grey (later brown) greatcoat.

Summer 1943: a tough-looking *podpolkovnik* commanding a tank battalion stands with a crewman in front of a T-34. The officer wears an M34 padded tank-crew helmet and an M43 summer field shirt; his gold braid service shoulder boards have red piping and centre-stripes, gold tank branch badges, and two medium-sized silver rank stars. On his left breast he displays the Order of the Red Banner, which from February 1943 was worn with a red-and-white ribbon folded in the Imperial Russian 'V'-shape, and on his right breast is the Order of the Patriotic War. The crewman wears a khaki M35 tank overall over his field shirt. (Tschakov Collection)

New female uniforms were introduced from 9 August 1942, including a khaki woollen beret with M41 subdued badge, a khaki skirt, a field shirt without breast pockets, and a *telogreika* quilted jacket.

Branch distinctions

Branch distinctions for the Red Army were as detailed in Table 3 (page 21), modifying the system established on 10 March 1936:

Five **facing colours** (red, crimson, blue, black and dark green) were worn on the band of the peaked service cap; the rhomboidal collar patches of greatcoats, armoured troops' leather jackets, and general officers' tunics; and the parallelogram collar patches of the officers' dress tunic, greatcoat and field shirt.

Five **piping colours** (red, crimson, blue, royal-blue and black) appeared on the crown seam and upper band edge of the peaked service cap; the collar and cuffs of general officers' tunics, the officers' dress tunic and winter field shirt; the collar patches of political officers and enlisted men; the cuffs, collar and front edge of the general officers' greatcoat; the collar patches of the enlisted ranks' greatcoat; and officers' service breeches and trousers.

The existing 21 brass (Veterinary, white metal) **branch badges** were increased when the Supply and Administration Service replaced its M36 badge with a red star, gold hammer and sickle badge from 31 March 1942 (general officers, since 13 July 1940). Meanwhile the Artillery and Tank Engineering Services adopted the badge already worn by Technical Officers (now the Technical Service) – a gilt metal crossed hammer and wrench, in silver for field officers with secondary education appointed from 14 September 1942.

Each cavalry reconnaissance squadron was assigned five–six reconnaissance observers, distinguished from 20 February 1936 to 1941 by a badge of binoculars, on crossed sabres, on a theodolite (instead of the horseshoe-and-sabres cavalry branch badge). This was in gilt metal for Reconnaissance Observers 1st Class, silver metal for 2nd Class. Anti-Tank Artillery personnel wore on the upper left sleeve of the field shirt and greatcoat a badge of gilt metal crossed cannons on a black cloth diamond, piped red round the edges.

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A Red Army general officer, in M43 service uniform with full medals, inspects a group of Kuban Cossacks. The Cossack officer accompanying him (left) wears a reinstated M36 Cossack dress uniform, comprising a *kubanka* cap, a red *beshmet* tunic, and a dark blue *cherkeska* frock coat with red cuffs; his M43 gold braid shoulder boards would have blue piping and centre-stripes and a silver Cavalry branch badge. The soldiers in the uncropped photo are wearing standard winter field uniforms with *kubanka* caps. (Courtesy Central Museum of the Armed Forces, Moscow, via Nik Cornish)

Combat arms rank insignia

The M35 rank insignia and titles were modified in 1940 for combat arms (see Table 4, page 34). These changes were ordered on **13 July 1940** (general officers' insignia and titles); **26 July 1940** (field officers' and subalterns' insignia); **2 November 1940** (enlisted titles); and **1 January 1941** (enlisted rank insignia). General officers wore rhomboidal collar patches on all uniforms; other officers, NCOs and men wore rhomboidal collar patches on greatcoats and armoured troops' leather jackets, but parallelogram patches on M41 dress tunics, armoured troops' steel-grey service tunics, and field shirts. Officers of the combat arms also wore cuff chevrons of gold braid and red cloth:

Marshal Sovetskogo Soyuza: Red rhomboidal collar patches piped gold, with a large embroidered star above crossed embroidered laurel leaves, with an embroidered hammer and sickle at the base. Cuffs, a large 54mm-diameter gold star with 2mm red piping, above a 58mm-deep red chevron with a 15mm gold chevron, above a 22mm red chevron with gold crossed embroidered laurel leaves, above a 15mm gold chevron. From 2 September 1940, a gold star with platinum inset and five diamonds was worn from a red watered-silk neck ribbon.

General Armii: Red collar patches piped gold, with five gilt metal 20mm-diameter stars; cuffs, a 54mm gold cuff star with 2mm red piping, above 10mm-deep red, 32mm gold, and 3mm red chevrons.

Other general officers: Branch-colour cloth or velvet collar patches piped gold, with gilt branch badge, and 4–2 gilt metal 20mm stars. Cuffs, a medium 44mm-diameter gold star with 2mm branch-colour piping, above 32mm gold and 3mm branch-colour chevrons. (Most officers holding the rank of *kombrig*, abolished 7 May 1940, were demoted to *polkovnik*.)

Field officers: Branch-colour collar patches piped gold, with gilt branch-badge and 4–1 red enamel bars. Cuffs, gold and red chevrons with a 3mm red upper and lower border: respectively (from senior to junior) – 6mm gold, 7mm red, 6mm gold, 7mm red, 10mm gold; or 6mm gold, 10mm red, 10mm gold (*podpolkovnik* and *mayor*); or 6mm gold, 10mm red, 6mm gold.

Subalterns: Branch-colour collar patch piped gold, with gilt branch-badge and 3–1 red enamel squares. Cuffs, gold and red chevrons with a 3mm red upper and lower border: respectively – 4mm gold, 5mm red, 4mm gold, 5mm red, 4mm gold; or 4mm gold, 7mm red, 4mm gold; or 10mm red (including border), 4mm gold.

Officer cadets: Branch-colour collar patch with wide red edging and branch-colour upper and gold lower piping, branch badge, and 4–0 red enamel triangles, for *kursant-starshina* to *kursant*.

NCOs: Branch-colour collar patch with branch piping (*starshina,* added gold inner piping); red central stripe; large yellow metal triangle, branch badge, and 4–1 red enamel triangles.

NCO candidate (*Kursant*): Branch-colour collar patch with branch piping; red central stripe; large red triangle, and branch badge.

Men: *Yefreytor* – Branch-colour collar patch with branch piping, red central stripe; large yellow metal triangle, and branch-badge. *Krasnoarmeyets* – Branch-colour collar patch with branch piping, branch badge.

From **1 August 1941**, to avoid appearing too conspicuous, officers and political officers removed the cuff insignia from their field uniforms. All ranks wore dark brown (sometimes dark green) enamel branch badges

(continued on page 33)

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ARMED FORCES COMMANDERS, 1942

1: *General-Polkovnik* I.S. Konev; Western Front, August 1942

2: *Vitse-Admiral* V.F. Tributs; Red Banner Baltic Fleet, April 1942

3: *General'niy Komissar Gosudarstvennoy Bezopasnosti* L.P. Beriya

A

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NORTHERN & CENTRAL RUSSIA, 1942

1: *General-Leytenant* A.A. Vlasov, 2nd Shock Army; Tikhvin, March 1942

2: Infantry subaltern, 257th Rifle Div; Kholm, January 1942

3: *Krasnoarmeyets*, 214th Airborne Bde; Vyazma, April 1942

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CAUCASUS & CRIMEA, 1942
1: *Serzhant*, 63rd Cavalry Division, August 1942
2: *Krasnoarmeyets*, 1st Mtn Detachment, November 1942
3: *Michman*, 9th Naval Infantry Bde; Sevastopol, June 1942

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SOUTHERN RUSSIA, 1942

1: *Divizionniy Kommissar*, 40th Army; Kastornoye, June 1942

2: *Voenfel'dsher 2-go ranga*, 76th Rifle Div; Kharkov, May 1942

3: *Kapitan*, 207th Fighter Air Div; Voronezh, May 1942

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BATTLE OF STALINGRAD, 1942–43
1: *Gvardii Starshiy Leytenant*, 16th Guards Tank Bde, December 1942
2: *Starshiy Serzhant*, 112th Rifle Div, November 1942
3: *Inzhener-Podpolkovnik*, 291st 'Kiev' Ground-Attack Air Div, November 1942

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NORTH & CENTRAL RUSSIA, 1943

1: *Serzhant*, 45th Guards Rifle Div; Krasny Bor, February 1943

2: Partisan officer; Pripyat Marshes, Belarus, April 1943

3: *General-Mayor Tankovykh Voysk*, 33rd Army; Smolensk, August 1943

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KURSK & KHARKOV, 1943
1: *Krasnoarmeyets*, Assault Engineer-Sapper Brigade; Kursk, July 1943
2 & 3: *Yefreytor*, 183rd Rifle Div; Kharkov, August 1943

G

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UKRAINE & CAUCASUS, 1943

1: *Gvardii Starshina 2-y stat'i*, Black Sea Fleet, June 1943

2: *Podpolkovnik*, 290th NKVD Rifle Regt; Novorossiysk, October 1943

3: *Krasnoarmeyets*, 3rd Penal Bn, 13th Army; Kiev, November 1943

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A female *starshiy serzhant* sniper posed as if waiting for her spotter to identify a target. Both women are wearing M42 fleece caps and M41 quilted jackets; the sniper has a broad dark red cloth rank bar on her khaki, crimson-piped M43 field shoulder boards, and wears M43 khaki collar patches with brown buttons. She carries a 7.62mm Moisin Nagant 1891/30g sniper's rifle with a PU 3.5x telescope sight. The Red Army is said to hold the record for sniping skills; Mihail Surkov was credited with achieving 709 kills, and Lyudmila Pavlichenko with 309. (Tschakov Collection)

and rank insignia on plain khaki rhomboidal and parallelogram field collar patches (although general officers often unofficially added gold piping). The large yellow metal triangle was removed from NCOs' collar patches, thus also making the *yefreytor* indistinguishable from a *krasnoarmeyets*. The M40 coloured collar patches were still worn on dress and service uniforms, and many personnel – especially general officers – continued to wear them on field uniforms.

From **21 May 1942**, all personnel of Guards divisions, brigades or regiments, but not Guards armies or corps (which contained non-Guards formations) prefixed their rank titles with 'Guards' (*Gvardii*); e.g., *Gvardii General-Leytenant*. A Guardsman received better pay and equipment and had better promotion prospects.

A female officer, probably of a combat arm, poses wearing a dark blue M36 beret – scarcely sufficient headgear for the bitter Russian winter. She wears the popular M31 sheepskin-lined greatcoat with a sheepskin collar, the M35 service belt with two braces worn crossed diagonally, and a holstered TT-33 pistol. (Courtesy Central Museum of the Armed Forces, Moscow, via Nik Cornish)

Services and Specialist Officers' rank insignia

Medical, Veterinary and Legal officers wore the M35 collar rank insignia (including general officers' red enamel diamonds) but had 'non-combat' rank-titles, and wore no cuff chevrons. Officers ranking as *voenvrach 1-go ranga*, etc., were now equivalent to *podpolkovnik*, not *polkovnik*. However, Supply and Administration and Technical officers were granted combat arms collar rank insignia (including general officers' stars), cuff chevrons, and rank titles with 'service' suffixes – IS (Supply), TS (General Technical), IAS (Artillery or Aviation Engineering), and ITS (Tank Engineering).

Political officers lost status. The grade of *armeyskiy kommissar 1-go ranga* was abolished, as was *brigadniy kommissar*, and *starshiy batyal'onniy kommissar* (equivalent to *podpolkovnik*) was introduced, although many 'one-diamond commissars' continued to wear their obsolete rank insignia. Political officers now wore branch badges, but no cuff star, and were demoted by one rank on 9 October 1942; thus a *korpusnoy kommissar*, formerly equivalent to a *komkor* (now *general-leytenant*), henceforth ranked with a *general-mayor*.

Other insignia

Several badges were introduced for wear on the right upper breast. Wound badges, introduced 14 July 1942, comprised horizontal cloth bars 43mm long x 5–6mm wide on a uniform-colour cloth rectangle; yellow bars for

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Table 4: Red Army, NKVD, Air Force and Navy ranks and rank insignia, 13 July 1940 to 5 January 1943

Land Forces Combat Arms & NKVD Internal and Frontier Troops General officer variants Artillery & Armour Engineering Services/Engineering field officer variants *(collar insignia/gold cuff chevrons)*	**Air Force Combat Arms** Aviation Engineering Service & Engineering field officer variants *(rank insignia as Land Force combat arms)*	**Navy Seamen's Branch** (7) Coastal Defence & Naval Aviation (cuff rings and bars)	**British Army/ Royal Navy equivalents, 1939–1945**
Vysshiy komandniy sostav (Corps of Chief Commanders)			**General officers**
Marshal Sovetskogo Soyuza (1) *(large star & wreath/star, chevron, wreath, chevron)*			Field Marshal
General Armii (1) *(5 stars/star, medium red & wide gold chevrons)*		**Admiral Flota (8)** *(star 4 medium & 1 wide rings)*	General/ Admiral
General-Polkovnik General-Polkovnik TaV/A/IV/VS/TeV (2) General-Polkovnik IAS/ITS (3) *(4 stars/star, wide gold chevron)*	**General-Polkovnik Aviatsii** General-Polkovnik IAS (5)	**Admiral (8)** General-Polkovnik BS (9) General-Polkovnik Aviatsii (10) *(star,3 medium & 1 wide rings)*	Lieut-General/Vice-Admiral
General-Leytenant General-Leytenant TaV/A/IV/VS/TeV General-Leytenant IAS/ITS *(3 star/star, wide gold chevron)*	**General-Leytenant Aviatsii** General-Leytenant IAS	**Vitse-Admiral** General-Leytenant BS General-Leytenant Aviatsii *(star,2 medium & 1 wide rings)*	Major-General/ Rear-Admiral
General-Mayor General-Mayor TaV/A/IV/VS/TeV General-Mayor IAS/ITS *(2 stars/star, wide gold chevron)*	**General-Mayor Aviatsii** General-Mayor IAS	**Kontr-Admiral** General-Mayor BS General-Mayor Aviatsii *(star, 1 medium & 1 wide rings)*	Brigadier/Commodore
Starshiy komandniy sostav (Corps of Senior Commanders)			**Field officers**
Polkovnik Inzhener-Polkovnik/Polkovnik IAS/ITS (4) *(4 bars/2 thin & 1 medium chevron)*	**Polkovnik** Inzhener-Polkovnik/Polkovnik IAS (6)	**Kapitan 1-go ranga** Polkovnik *(star,1 wide ring)*	Colonel/Captain
Podpolkovnik Inzhener-Podpolkovnik/Podpolkovnik IAS/ITS *(3 bars/1 thin & 1 medium chevron)*	**Podpolkovnik** Inzhener-Podpolkovnik/Podpolkovnik IAS	**Kapitan 2-go ranga** Podpolkovnik *(star, 4 medium rings)*	Lieut-Colonel/Commander
Mayor Inzhener-Mayor/Mayor IAS/ITS *(2 bars/1 thin & 1 medium chevron)*	**Mayor** Inzhener-Mayor Mayor IAS	**Kapitan 3-go ranga** Mayor *(star, 3 medium rings)*	Major/Lieut- Commander
Kapitan Inzhener-Kapitan/Kapitan IAS/ITS *(1 bar/2 thin & 1 medium red chevron)*	**Kapitan** Inzhener-Kapitan/ Kapitan IAS	**Kapitan-Leytenant** Kapitan *(star, 1 thin & 2 medium rings)*	Captain/Lieutenant
Srednyi komandniy sostav (Corps of Intermediate Commanders)			**Subalterns**
Starshiy Leytenant Starshiy Tekhnik-Leytenant *(3 squares/3 thin gold chevrons)*	**Starshiy Leytenant** Starshiy Teknik-Leytenant	**Starshiy Leytenant** Starshiy Leytenant *(star, 2 medium rings)*	(Senior) Lieutenant (Senior) Sub-Lieutenant
Leytenant Teknik-Leytenant *(2 squares/2 thin gold chevrons)*	**Leytenant** Teknik-Leytenant	**Leytenant** Leytenant *(star, 1 thin & 1 medium rings)*	Lieutenant/ Sub-Lieutenant
Mladshiy Leytenant *(1 square/1 thin gold chevron)*	**Mladshiy Leytenant**	**Mladshiy Leytenant** Madshiy Leytenant *(star, 1 medium ring)*	2nd Lieutenant/ Acting Sub-Lieutenant

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Mladshiy komandniy sostav (Corps of Junior Commanders)			NCOs
Starshina *(1 large, 4 small triangles)*	**Starshina**	**Michman** Starshina *(red/gold star, 4 thin rings)*	Warrant Officer II/ Warrant Officer
Starshiy Serzhant *(1 large, 3 small triangles)*	**Starshiy Serzhant**	**Glavniy Starshina** Starshiy Serzhant (red/gold star, 3 thin rings)	Colour Sgt/Chief Petty Officer
Serzhant *(1 large, 2 small triangles)*	**Serzhant**	**Starshina 1-y stat'i** Serzhant *(red/gold star, 2 thin bars)*	Sergeant/Petty Officer
Mladshiy Serzhant *(1 large, 1 small triangle)*	**Mladshiy Serzhant**	**Starshina 2-y stat'i** Mladshiy Serzhant *(red/gold star, 1 thin bar)*	Corporal/Leading Seaman
Ryadovoy sostav (Corps of Privates)			**Men**
Yefreytor *(1 large triangle)*	**Yefreytor**	**Starshiy Krasnoflotets** Yefreytor (red/gold star)	Lance Corporal/Able Seaman
Krasnoarmeyets *(plain collar patch)*	**Krasnoarmeyets** *(plain collar patch)*	**Krasnoflotets** Krasnoarmeyets (red star)	Private/Ordinary Seaman

Notes:
(1) Ranks not held in NKVD Interior Troops or Frontier Troops.
(2) TaV = 'Tankovykh Voysk' (of Armour); A = 'Artillerii' (of Artillery); IV= 'Inzhernykh Voysk' (of Engineers); VS = 'Voysk Svyazi' (of Signals); TeV = 'Tekhnicheskikh Voysk' (of Technical Troops).
(3) IAS = 'Inzherno-Artilleriyskoy Sluzhby' (of the Artillery Engineering Service); ranks introduced 4.3.1942; ITS = 'Inzherno-Tankovoy Sluzhby' (of the Armour Engineering Service), ranks introduced 8.3.1942.
(4) IAS and ITS ranks added 14.9.1942 for officers with secondary education only.
(5) IAS = 'Inzhenerno-Aviatsionnoy Sluzbby' (of the Aviation Engineering Service), ranks introduced 10.4.1942.
(6) IAS ranks added 14.9.1942 for officers with secondary education only.
(7) The NKVD Naval Division and NKVD Frontier Troops' Coastguard had Red Navy ranks and rank insignia.
(8). The NKVD had no ranks at this level.
(9) BS = 'Beregovoy Sluzhby' (of Coastal Artillery).
(10) 'Aviatsii' (of Naval Aviation).

serious wounds, above dark red for light wounds. The 46mm x 36mm Guards badge issued 21 May 1942 was a red enamel star in a white enamel circle edged with a gold laurel wreath, bearing a red enamel flag, above *Gvardiya* in gold.

Specialist proficiency shields were introduced from 1942, comprising a red enamel shield edged in silver metal in a gilt metal wreath, with a red enamel circle enclosing a gilt hammer and sickle; they bore the title of the specialism in gold in a white enamel circle, above a gilt branch badge. The title was usually prefixed with 'excellent'; e.g. *Otlychniy Tankist* ('excellent tank-crewman'). Nineteen of these badges were introduced for the Red Army: sniper, machine-gunner, mortarman, artilleryman, tank-crewman, sapper, miner (21 May 1942); medical orderly (4 November 1942); railwayman (21 December 1942); reconnaissance scout (10 March 1943); signaller (3 April 1943); pontoon engineer (5 April 1943); AA artilleryman (30 April 1943); driver, road engineer, cook, baker (8 July 1943); tractor-driver (10 September 1943), and finally firefighter (22 November 1944).

The M36 armband worn on the left upper sleeve by the Military Transport Service and Railway Troops (VOSO) – in red cloth edged gold, with a red star on a winged anchor, crossed hammer and wrench – was abolished on 22 March 1941.

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RED ARMY AIR FORCE

1 January 1942–31 December 1943

The Red Army Military Air Force (*Voenno-Vozdushnye Sily Krasnoy Armii,* VVS-KA) was renamed Red Army Aviation (*Aviatsiya Krasnoy Armii,* AKA) in 1942. It was commanded from April 1941 by *General-Leytenant Aviatsii* Pavel Fedororovich Zhigarev. He was replaced on 11 April 1942 by *General-Leytenant Aviatsii* (later *General-Polkovnik Aviatsii*; 17 March 1943, *Glavniy Marshal Aviatsii*) Aleksandr Aleksandrovich Novikov, a gifted strategist, who reformed the AKA into a formidable fighting machine.

Air Force branches

The Air Force was a combat arm of the Red Army, organized as follows:
(1) Air Force. This comprised Air Regiments; Airborne (Paratroop) Brigades; and other ground units. The Air Force also contained **penal units**, including penal air squadrons; assigned to the most dangerous fronts, the aircrews received no credit for missions flown, and usually served until their death in action.
(2) Services. Supply and Administration Service ammunition and supply columns; from 28 January 1942, the General Technical Service, from which the Aviation Engineering Service was formed 10 April 1942; Medical, and Veterinary services.
3) Specialist Officers. Legal Officers, Band-masters, and Political Officers, the latter reassigned 9 October 1942 as unit commanders' administrative deputies.

Women were assigned to the Services, but also fought as pilots, other aircrew and paratroopers.

Organization of air units

General Novikov completed the definitive reorganization of the Air Force into five sections (plus the paratroopers) on 11 April 1942:

The Long Range Bomber Air Force (DBA) was redesignated Long Range Aviation (*Aviatisiya dal'nego deystviya* – ADD) in March 1942; under direct Stavka command, this comprised seven bomber air divisions, expanding to 16 in May 1943. However, the priority enjoyed by tactical over strategic bombing hampered the development of this force.

Frontal Aviation (FA) and Army Aviation (AA) were reorganized from 5 May 1942 into 17 Air Armies numbered in sequence, developed from the ten Air Strike Groups (UAGs) that Novikov had formed to defend Leningrad in 1941. An Air Army (*Vozdushnaya Armiya*), under a *general-polkovnik* to *general-mayor*, had anything from 150 to 1,000 aircraft, usually in five air divisions, plus air

Five officers of a Bomber Air Regiment pose in front of a Tupolev Tu-2, spring 1942; they all display medals, and typify the nonchalance often affected by aircrew facing death on a daily basis. They wear the M40 Air Force officers' khaki peaked service cap with light blue band and piping and M37 insignia. Four have M35 winter field shirts, and the centre man the lighter cotton summer version, with M35 dark blue or M40 khaki breeches, and the M32 field belt or M35 service belt with cross brace. (Tschakov Collection)

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regiments and squadrons. However, 1st Air Army eventually comprised 13 divisions. One or two air armies were assigned to each Front (see Table 1, page 6).

The GHQ Reserve, comprising 13 Air Corps, each with 120–270 aircraft, could be deployed to reinforce the air armies.

The National Air Defence Fighter Aviation (*Istrebitel'naya Aviatsiya PVO* – IA-PVO) provided fighter cover for important cities including Moscow (with 40 fighter air regiments in 1942), Leningrad and Stalingrad.

The echelon below the Air Army was the numbered Air Corps (*Aviakorpus*), designated either bomber (BAK), fighter (IAK), mixed (SAK) or ground-attack (ShAK). The next level was the Air Division (*Aviadiviziya*), designated as bomber (BAD) or fighter (IAD). Within the division was the Air Regiment (*Aviapolk*), either bomber (BAP), long-range bomber (DRAP), fighter (IAP), artillery-spotter (KRAP), reconnaissance (RAP), medical evacuation (SANAP), mixed (SAP), ground-attack (ShAP), or transport (TRAP) – many transport regiments were manned by Civil Air Fleet (GVF) personnel. An air regiment comprised four 15-aircraft squadrons (squadron = *Aviaeskadril'ya*). The tactical groupings were the two-aircraft *Para,* four-aircraft flight (*Zveno*), and the group (*Gruppa*) with six to eight aircraft.

By 1943 the VVS/AKA had generally taken the offensive over all sectors of the front, and a new generation of increasingly experienced pilots and leaders had replaced the catastrophic losses of 1941. The strength of the Luftwaffe on the Eastern Front was significantly reduced by the withdrawal of fighter units to defend the Reich from the Allied bombing offensive, and after the battle of Kursk in July 1943 the VVS/AKA gained permanent air superiority.

AIR FORCE UNIFORMS

13 July 1940–5 January 1943

The Air Force wore M40 dress uniforms, including the light grey general officers', and khaki M41 officers' and enlisted uniforms. The distinctive M35 dark blue uniforms were abolished from 1 October 1941 with effect from December 1942 (the M35 *budyonovka* field cap had already been discontinued from 5 July 1940). Flight clothing and equipment was as described in Men-at-Arms 464, with additions: the M40 fleece-lined winter leather helmet with integral black earphones, or unlined summer version; and the M42 fleece-lined brown leather flying jacket with large brown fleece collar. Female personnel wore M36 dark blue and khaki uniforms, both with dark blue skirts.

Air Force insignia

Red Army M40 rank insignia were worn, with light blue branch facing-colour and piping. Piping was black for political officers, NCOs and men. The three general officer ranks had a medium-sized gold cuff star with light blue piping, above 32mm-deep gold and 3mm light blue chevrons.

The M24 pilot and M25 flight technician qualification badges continued to be worn on the left upper sleeve, while Aviation Engineering Service officers wore a gold embroidered version of the collar branch badge. Personnel of Guards air divisions or regiments prefixed their rank titles from 21 May 1942 with 'Guards', and wore the M42 enamel Guards badge.

VDV paratroopers made many unit-strength combat jumps during 1942–43, in addition to small drops behind Axis lines to support the partisans.

East of Vyazma on 2/3 January 1942, the 1st Bn, 201st Abn Bde seized a bridge north-west of Medyn, and linked up with 43rd Army units advancing from the east on 11 January. South of them, elements of two other units were dropped to seize an airfield for air-landing troops, but heavy resistance, deep snow and shortage of lift aircraft doomed this attempt, and only 87 survivors managed to reach 43rd Army troops on 20 January.

Subsequently, some 10,000 *desantniki* of 4th Abn Corps were dropped into the Vyazma area between 27 January and 29 May 1942, in the largest Red Army parachute operation of the war. The 7th and 8th Abn Bdes linked up with Soviet ground forces, but 214th Abn Bde was eventually wiped out. The 1st Airborne Corps' 23rd and 211th Abn Bdes were also dropped into the Vyazma region on 15 April and 29 May 1942.

The three-company 1st Naval Special Landing Detachment operated between 23 December 1941 and 24 October 1942 in the Kerch region of the northern Caucasus. In the last significant airborne operation of the war, 1st, 3rd and 5th Abn Bdes jumped on 24 September 1943 as part of the Lower Dnieper offensive.

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LEFT **January 1942: four members of a bomber crew discuss a mission with a ground crew officer. The aircrew wear M33 fleece-lined flying helmets and goggles, with M42 flying jackets and lined gauntlets, while the pilot (left) has the khaki M40 winter overalls with a fleece collar. The ground-crew officer (second left) wears an M42 winter cap and M36 leather greatcoat. (Courtesy Central Museum of the Armed Forces, Moscow, via Nik Cornish)**

RIGHT **Spring 1942: the pilot and rear gunner of an Ilyushin Il-2 *Shturmovik* ground-attack aircraft. They are wearing M40 unlined leather summer helmets with integral black earphones, goggles, blue summer flight overalls without insignia, and PL-3M parachute harness. The heavily-armoured *Shturmovik* played a crucial role on the Eastern Front, and was produced in greater numbers than any other aircraft in history. (Courtesy Central Museum of the Armed Forces, Moscow, via Nik Cornish)**

AIRBORNE FORCES

In January 1942 the Airborne Forces (VDV) comprised 1st–10th Airborne Corps, each formed of HQ troops and three airborne brigades. Following heavy combat losses, these paratroop corps were re-formed during June–August 1942 into ten Guards rifle divisions. Numbered 32–41, each had HQ troops, one Guards artillery and three Guards rifle regiments. In December 1942, these divisions were re-formed as 1st–10th Guards Airborne Divisions; six more, numbered 11–16, followed in September 1943, the whole comprising 1st–30th Airborne Brigades.

A Guards Airborne Division (*Gvardeyskaya Vozdushno-Desantnye Diviziya*) comprised HQ troops and three airborne brigades. A brigade (*Vozdushno-Desantnye Brigada*) had 3,553 men in Brigade HQ Troops (signals, bicycle reconnaissance, engineer, and AA-MG companies, and a two-battery AT battalion), plus four 715-man parachute rifle battalions. In late October 1943 the HQ troops were strengthened to a four-battery AT battalion and a two-battery artillery battalion, and the AA-MG company became an AA battalion, while the 699-strong rifle battalions were by then armed mainly with sub-machine guns and sniper rifles.

Airborne brigades received Red Army replacements wearing Army insignia, but the paratroopers retained Air Force uniforms, including the khaki cloth flying helmet, a khaki flight overall, and a hooded jumpsuit of white reversing to light green with large white patches. The M33 parachute qualification badge was worn on the left breast.

NAVY

1 January 1942–31 December 1943

The Military Sea Fleet (*Voenno-Morski Flot* – VMF) was headed by *Admiral* Nikolai Gerasimovich Kuznetzov, as People's Commissar for the Navy and naval commander-in-chief.

Naval branches and organization

The Navy retained the 1941 organization, in five branches, four sea-going fleets, and – at various dates – 13 lake and river flotillas:

(1) Seamen's branch:

Northern Fleet, with White Sea and Onega Flotillas.

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Red Banner Baltic Fleet, with Peipus (disbanded August 1941), Pina (disbanded 5 October 41), Ilmen (re-formed April 1943) and Ladoga flotillas.
Black Sea Fleet, with Azov, Caspian, Danube, Dnieper Red Banner (re-formed September 1943) and Volga (formed 27 October 1941) flotillas.
Pacific Fleet, with Kamchatka and Amur Red Banner flotillas.

This branch also included at least 15 land-based Naval Infantry and two Naval Rifle brigades.

(2) Coastal Defence. Coastal artillery regiments; naval railway artillery brigades and independent batteries; AA artillery regiments and independent battalions.

(3) Naval Aviation (VVS-VMF), under *General-Leytenant Aviatsii* (1 May 1943, *General-Polkovnik Aviatsii*) Semen Fedorovich Zhavoronkov. 16 air divisions (numbered 3, 4, & 6–8 Bomber; 1 Fighter; 9–13 Ground Attack; 14–16 Mixed; 2 & 5 Torpedo-Bomber) were attached to the Fleets and supported the Air Force.

(4) Services. Supply and Administration Service; Naval Technical Service, divided into Line Engineering (from 13 July 1940), Naval Construction (from 27 June 1942), and Aviation Engineering (from 10 April 1942), plus artillery, mine and signals engineers, and naval architects; Medical, and Veterinary Services.

(5) Specialist Officers. Legal Officers; Political Officers, reassigned 13 October 1942 as unit commanders' administrative deputies.

Summer 1943: a nurse and a medical orderly, assisted by the pilot, ease a wounded soldier into a Polikarpov S-3 air ambulance. The S-3 was an adaptation of the Polikarpov U-2 trainer. The nurse wears a white nurse's cap, khaki M36 female field shirt and M42 khaki skirt, with an M35 enlisted ranks' leather belt and a first-aid haversack. (Courtesy Central Museum of the Armed Forces, Moscow, via Nik Cornish)

Summary of naval operations

The Northern and Pacific Fleets escorted Allied convoys during the latter stage of their voyages to deliver Lend-Lease supplies to bases at, respectively, Murmansk and Vladivostok. The Red Banner Baltic Fleet was trapped in its Kronstadt base by the Helsinki-Tallinn network of German minefields, and its surface units were unable to challenge the German Navy in this area. The Black Sea Fleet was heavily engaged in supporting Red Army strategic operations. The Don River Detachment of the Azov Flotilla fought in the Voronezh-Voroshilovgrad defensive battles of 28 June–24 July 1942, and the Black Sea Fleet and Azov Flotillas helped defend the North Caucasus during 25 July–31 December 1942. Meanwhile Volga Flotilla gunboats helped defend and blockade Stalingrad, 25 July 1942–2 February 1943, and Black Sea Fleet ships supported the North Caucasus offensive of 1 January–4 February 1943. Units of the Black Sea Fleet and Azov Flotilla helped clear the Caucasus in the Novorossiysk-Taman offensive of 10 September–9 October 1943.

An Asiatic sniper in a Naval Infantry brigade, armed with an M1891/30g rifle fitted with the long PT 4x telescope sight. The ribbon of his M34 *bezkozirka* cap bears the Northern Fleet title – *SEVERNY FLOT* – in gold wire Cyrillic capitals. (Author's collection)

NAVY UNIFORMS

24 January 1941–15 February 1935

The M24 naval uniform was restyled as the M34 pattern, introduced 16 April 1934. This was mainly black but with some dark blue and white uniform items, some of them introduced from 24 January 1941. Flag officers adopted Red Army M40 brass buttons with the seal of the Soviet Union, while other ranks retained buttons with a fouled-anchor motif. 'M34' and 'M41' refer here to items introduced 16 April 1934 and 24 January 1941, unless otherwise specified.

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A naval *kapitan-leytenant* serving ashore thoughtfully examines an F-1 fragmentation grenade. He is wearing the M39 officer's peaked service cap with M24 badge, but with M34 Armoured Troops' black leather jacket and breeches with riding boots. Note his gold braid star and rank bars on both cuffs. (Author's collection)

Officers' uniform

Officers below flag rank wore the black M39 peaked service cap introduced 20 October 1939, with a black patent leather chin strap and peak, and a white cloth crown in summer. The crown and upper band edge were piped white; the M24 cap badge portrayed a gold metal fouled anchor, on two concentric gilt metal rings, in a gold embroidered wreath, below a red enamel five-pointed star edged gold and bearing a gold crossed hammer and sickle. The M41 flag officers' service cap had a gold wire chin strap with M40 buttons, and gold wire edging and oakleaf embroidery on the peak. In cold weather officers wore an M34 black lambskin cap with a gilt metal M24 badge. The black M34 *pilotka* sidecap was piped white, and bore an M24 badge without the wreath.

The M41 flag officers' black double-breasted dress tunic had a closed, standing collar, with a gold-embroidered star behind a fouled anchor on black cloth collar patches with gold braid edging. It had two rows of six M40 buttons, no visible pockets, and M41 rank rings above the two M40 cuff buttons, and was worn with a gold braid M41 dress belt with two slings for the M40 naval dirk. The M34 officers' black open-necked service tunic was worn with the dirk for semi-formal occasions, but for everyday duty line officers wore the M34 dark blue closed-collar single-breasted service tunic, or in summer a white cotton version. The black M34 officers' greatcoat, grey raincoat or black rubberized raincoat were available for cold or wet weather. The M41 black woollen trousers replaced the M34 'moleskin' trousers.

Enlisted ranks' uniform

A non-commissioned Petty Officer Corps was finally formed on 3 December 1940, with rank insignia introduced **30 November 1940**. Senior petty officers, ranked as *michman* and *glavniy starshina*, wore officers' uniforms

Table 5: Red Navy Officers' Branch Distinctions, 24 January 1941 to 15 February 1943

Branch	Metal colour (1)	Star above rank rings	Branch cloth (3)	Type of rank-title with example (all Rear Admiral equivalents)
Seamen officers & Naval Infantry	Gold	Gold	–	Navy; e.g. Kontr-Admiral
Naval Aviation	Gold	Gold	Light blue	Army; e.g. General-Mayor Aviatsii
Technical – Line Engineers	Gold	Gold	Crimson	Navy; e.g. Inzhener-Kontr-Admiral
Technical – Naval Construction	Silver	Silver	Crimson	Army; e.g. Inzhener-General-Mayor
Technical – Aviation Engineers	Silver	Silver	Light blue	Army; e.g. General-Mayor Inzhenerno-Aviatsionnoy Sluzby'
Supply and Administration Service	Silver	Silver	–	Army; e.g. General-Mayor Intendantskoy Sluzhby.
Medical Service	Silver	Silver	Green	Non-combat; e.g. Divvrach
Veterinary Service	Silver	Silver	Green	Non-combat; e.g. Divvetvrach
Legal Officers	Silver	Silver	Violet	Non-combat; e.g. Divvoenyurist
Political Officers (until 13.9.1942)	Gold	Red, edged gold (2)	Red	Political; e.g. Divizionniy Kommissar

Notes:
(1) Shown on the officers' wire or metal cap-badge, braid cuff rings and cuff-bars (M34 white summer service tunic).
(2) Flag officer equivalents had a large red cloth star piped in gold wire with a gold wire hammer and sickle.
(3) Kapitan 1-go ranga and Mladshiy Leytenant (and equivalents) had branch-colour piping above and below single rank ring.

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and M24 cap badges, while junior petty officers and seamen wore the seamen's 'square rig' uniform. The *starshina 1-y and 2-y stat'i* wore the M39 officers' peaked service cap with M22 badge, and a white cloth cover in summer; the *starshiy krasnoflotets* and *krasnoflotets* wore the seaman's M34 *bezkozirka* cap, with a white cloth cover in summer, M22 badge, and the name of the fleet, ship or establishment in gold Cyrillic capitals on a black silk ribbon. An alternative was the unpiped black M34 *pilotka* with the M22 badge. Continuing features of the seaman's uniform were the M34 dark blue winter or white cotton summer jumper, blue-and-white striped vest, black trousers, black enlisted belt with a rectangular brass buckle, and black ankle boots; and the black M24 seamen's greatcoat, black M34 *bushlat* pea-jacket, and off-white M34 canvas fatigue jacket and trousers.

Naval coast artillery, naval guard force enlisted, and naval aviation personnel adopted Red Army uniforms from April 1941, but reverted to naval uniforms from 27 March 1943.

A *starshiy leytenant* commanding a submarine scans the horizon, wearing an M34 rubberized hood for bad weather. On his M34 dark blue service tunic can be seen M43 cuff and shoulder-board rank insignia, and the Order of the Red Banner. (Author's collection)

Branch distinctions

Officers indicated their branch by a gold (line) or silver (services) cap badge, flag officers' cap peak embroidery and chin strap, and cuff rank insignia, and coloured cloth between the cuff rings of branches other than Seamen's. Naval, Army, non-combat or political rank titles were used, depending on the branch (see Table 5). Naval Aviation general officers wore two light blue trouser-stripes. Petty officers and seamen wore red speciality badges on the left upper sleeve of jumpers and pea-jackets, on black discs, edged in gold or yellow for senior petty officers or re-enlisted junior petty officers.

Rank insignia

Flag officers' rank titles and insignia were modified from **13 July 1940** (see Table 4). On the cuffs of the M41 flag officers' dress tunic, M34 officers' service tunic, greatcoat and dark blue closed-collar tunic, Seamen's branch officers wore a star over narrow (0.6cm), medium (1.3cm) and wide (3.2cm) gold braid rings, and gold braid bars on uniform-coloured patches on the cuffs of the M34 white service tunic, the raincoat and the rubberized raincoat:

Flag officers: 50mm-diameter black cloth star edged in gold wire, with a gold wire hammer and sickle, above (in descending order of seniority) 4–1 medium rings, above one wide ring.

A Red Army soldier points out a map reference to a group of Naval Infantry officers. The latter wear M40 helmets with M41 camouflage covers, and M34 dark blue service tunics with gold braid cuff stars and rank rings; note the Order of the Red Banner worn by the *kapitan-leytenant* company commander, and a PPSh-40 SMG (left). The sentry in the background wears seaman's uniform, with a helmet, the ubiquitous gas mask bag, and two RG-33 grenades in his belt. (Author's collection)

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Field officers: 30mm gold braid star, above 1 wide, 4–3 medium rings, or 1 narrow above 2 medium rings.

Subalterns: 30mm gold braid star, above 2 medium, 1 narrow above 1 medium rings, or 1 medium ring.

Officer cadets: Gold braid fouled anchor, above 4–0 narrow rings, for *kursant-starshina* to *kursant*.

Enlisted rank insignia were modified from **30 November 1940**, as follows:

Michman and *glavniy starshina:* Small red cloth star piped yellow, above 4–3 narrow gold braid cuff rings.

Junior petty officers: Small red star piped yellow, above 2–1 narrow gold braid cuff bars.

Seamen: Small red star cuff star, piped yellow or unpiped.

Other insignia

Seamen wore gold braid re-enlistment chevrons point down on their left upper sleeve beneath their speciality badges, one for every five years' service. They were also entitled to M42 wound badges. Many proficiency shields could be earned by seamen, especially naval infantrymen, but two shields – torpedoman, and submariner, established 21 May 1942 – were restricted to submarine personnel. Naval pilots displayed the M24 pilot qualification sleeve badge, while aviation engineering technical officers wore the M25 technical sleeve badge. From 1942, submarine officers wore on the left upper breast a badge with a red enamel star on a silver metal submarine.

The Russian tradition of awarding ships and naval units Guards status was revived from 18 January 1942, when four Northern Fleet units were designated Guards; they received Guards flags on 19 June 1942. Henceforth all ranks could prefix their titles with '*Gvardii*'. Officers and petty officers wore an orange watered-silk medal ribbon with three vertical black stripes (the Romanov imperial colours) within a gold clasp on the right upper chest, while seamen wore two orange stripes and orange edge piping on the long black silk ribbons of their M34 *bezkozirka* caps.

Naval Infantry

A Naval Infantry Brigade (*Brigada Morskoi Pekhoti*) could total 4,000 men, and at least 15 brigades fought during this period. The 12th and 254th Bdes defended Murmansk under Northern Fleet, and three – numbered 3, 4 (later 260), & 6 – defended Leningrad under the Baltic Fleet. Naval infantry figured heavily in the defence of Sevastopol, 30 October 1941–4 July 1942; six brigades, numbered 7–9, 79, 138 & 142, fought there under the Black Sea Fleet. The 83rd Bde defended Novorossiysk in August 1942, returning to recapture the city in September 1943. The 66th and 154th Bdes fought in the Don Bend in July 1942 with 64th Army; and 92nd Brigade, part of the Volga River Flotilla, defended Stalingrad in December 1942.

A Naval Rifle Brigade (*Brigada Morskoi Strelkovy*) was a more permanent unit, with naval personnel under Red Army command and wearing Red Army infantry uniforms. Only two brigades, numbered 7 and 8, are known to have been active, fighting on the Leningrad Front in 1942–43.

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NKVD SECURITY FORCES

1 January 1942–31 December 1943

The People's Commissariat for Internal Affairs (NKVD) was commanded by the sinister *General'niy Komissar GB* Lavrentiy Pavlovich Beriya. Personnel wore the Red Army M40 uniform with M35 peaked service caps (introduced 27 December 1935), and NKVD Internal and Frontier troops adopted M41 subdued collar patches and rank insignia.

***General-Leytenant* Ivan Ivanovich Maslennikov, Deputy People's Commissar for Internal Affairs, commanded the NKVD Internal Troops. When given battlefield commands he performed badly – though admittedly against superior German forces – at the head of 29th Army from July 1941 and 39th Army from December 1941. He wears the Red Army generals' light grey M40 dress cap and tunic, with royal-blue cap band, piping and collar patches. He has been awarded the Orders of Lenin, the Red Banner and the Red Star, and displays the senior NKVD officials' badge. (Author's collection)**

State Security

The State Security Main Directorate (GUGB) conducted espionage abroad, and hunted foreign spies, saboteurs and terrorists within the USSR; eliminated 'anti-Soviet' organizations; monitored communist ideology amongst the population (especially hostile minorities); and guarded high Party and government officials. On **14 April 1943** it broke away from the NKVD to form the People's Commissariat of State Security (*Narodnyi Komissariat Gosudarstvennoy Bezopasnosti* – NKGB), under *Komissar 1-go ranga GB* Vsevolod Nikolayevich Merkulov – like Stalin and Beriya, a Georgian – as People's Commissar of State Security. 'M37' refers here to 15 July 1937 unless otherwise stated.

GUGB/NKGB officers retained M37 rank titles and insignia until 18 February 1943. However, the rank equivalences were readjusted; thus a *mayor GB* was equivalent to a Red Army *kombrig* in 1937 but to a *polkovnik* in 1940. Officers wore the M35 royal-blue peaked service cap with a dark red band, and dark red collar patches, with crimson piping; an officer candidate (*kandidat na zvanie*) wore plain collar patches. Officers wore the oval hammer, sickle, and sword badge introduced 23 October 1935, on the left upper sleeve from 22 December 1935 and on both sleeves from 15 July 1937. The M37 double-breasted black leather greatcoat was popular, sometimes with a brown fur or fleece collar, with an M35 *finca* cap in grey cloth with a light brown lambswool fold-up peak and continuous ear flap. A white cotton peaked cap, introduced 27 December 1935, and an M37 white field shirt, could be worn with summer service uniform.

On **15 April 1943** the NKVD Special Section (*Osoby Otdel*) was redesignated the Chief Counter-Intelligence Directorate (GUKR), better known as SMERSH – '*Smert' Shpionam*' ('Death to Spies') – commanded by *Komissar 2-go ranga GB* Viktor Abakumov. SMERSH agents, wearing civilian clothes or any convenient military uniform, interrogated, arrested and executed 'traitors' – mutineers, deserters, spies, saboteurs, and anti-Soviet military or paramilitary forces. GUGB/NKGB and SMERSH personnel organized Red Army troops into divisional 'blocking detachments' (*Zagraditel'nye Otriady*) to enforce combat discipline by firing on retreating Soviet troops.

NKVD Internal Troops

There were ten Chief Directorates of NKVD Internal Troops (*Vnutrenniye Voiska*) under *General-Leytenant* (30 January 1943, *General-Polkovnik*) Ivan Ivanovich Maslennikov. Maslennikov and other NKVD officers were later assigned to command Red Army formations, in which role they generally served without distinction. NKVD Internal Troop units adopted Red Army

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A group of senior NKVD officers of the 70th 'NKVD' Army, including *General-Leytenant* Vladimir Maksimovich Sharapov, deputy commander (right), and *Polkovnik* Iakov Efimovich Maslovskii, head of the political section (centre). The officers are wearing Red Army uniforms and insignia, with M41 khaki peaked field caps and field shirts. Sharapov wears M43 NKVD-pattern gold braid service shoulder boards and the other officers khaki field shoulder boards, all with blue edge piping and centre-stripes and silver rank stars. Maslovskii wears the Orders of the Red Star and Red Banner. (Author's collection)

organization, and 53 NKVD operational divisions were active during this period, as follows (if subsequently re-formed, the new divisional number is shown in brackets):

Thirteen Rifle divisions fought with various field armies, and four re-formed as Army rifle divisions: 1 (46), 3, 4 (184), 5, 6, 9, 10 (181), 11, 12 18, 20 (92), Grozny and Makhachkala. Five Rifle divisions, formed October 1942, joined the Red Army 70th 'NKVD' Army as Army rifle divisions: Far Eastern (102), Trans-Baikal (106), Siberian (140), Central Asian (161), and Ural (175). 70th Army fought at Kursk in July 1943. Additionally, four Mountain Rifle divisions, formed 29 June 1941, later became Army Rifle divisions: 12 (268), 15 (257), 16 (262) and 26. Four Motorized divisions were attached to various fronts, and four re-formed as Army Rifle divisions: 1, 2, 4, 6 (11 February 1942, 8th Motorized), 7, 8 (63), 9 (31), 13 (95) and 21 (109).

Fourteen Railway Security divisions served as independent formations. Ten were renumbered (as in brackets) or formed on 11 February 1942: 2–8 (23–29), 18 (30), 19 (31) and 23; and four on 26 March 1942: 32–34, and 41 (10). Seven Special Installation Security divisions were formed 31 January 1942 to guard factories and important buildings – 15 (ex-11 & 12), 16, 17, 18 (ex-25) and 19 – and were later joined by 20 and 21. At least one, 19th, served at the front. There was also a 31st Special Installation and Railway Security Division. Five Convoy Troops Security divisions served on various fronts: 35 (ex-13), 36 (ex-14), and 37–39.

NKVD Internal Troops wore the M35 royal-blue and dark red NKVD peaked service cap, or the M40 khaki peaked service cap with a royal-blue band and crown piping. General officers wore 4–2 gold stars on royal-blue collar patches piped gold, and a 44mm gold cuff star with 2mm royal-blue piping, above 32mm gold and 3mm royal-blue chevrons. Lower ranks had M40 Red Army rank insignia and branch badges; combat-arms officers displayed these on dark red collar patches with gold piping, and had cuff chevrons, while NCOs and men, and officers of the services, had crimson collar piping.

NKVD Border Troops

The Border Troops (*Pogranichnyie Voiska*) were initially commanded by *General-Leytenant* Grigoriy Grigorevich Sokolov, and from 1942 by *General-Leytenant* Nikolai Pavlovich Stakhanov, following Sokolov's appointment as Central Front chief of staff and later commanding general of 26th Army. The Border Troops were organized into Border Military Districts, Border Regiments and Border Detachments; during this period they patrolled borders away from the war zones, or fought as Red Army replacements.

NKVD Border Troops wore the M35 green and royal-blue peaked service cap, air units adding the M37 Air Force insignia. General officers wore 4–2 gold stars on green collar patches piped gold, and a 44mm gold cuff star with 2mm green piping, above 32mm gold and 3mm green cuff chevrons. Lower ranks had M40 Red Army rank insignia and branch badges on green collar patches with gold piping, with cuff chevrons for combat-arms officers, and crimson piping for NCOs and men and for officers of the services. Border Troops Coastguards wore the full range of naval uniforms and insignia.

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PLATE COMMENTARIES

A: ARMED FORCES COMMANDERS, 1942

A1: *General-Polkovnik* Ivan Stepanovich Konev; Western Front, August 1942

Konev, admired by Stalin for his ruthlessness, triumphed at Kursk in July 1943 (and would later crush the Hungarian Revolution in November 1956). He wears the general officers' field uniform, his peaked service cap with the red 'combined arms' band. The tunic displays the M40 general officers' collar patches, and the cuff insignia officially abolished in February 1941. He wears M40 field breeches with riding boots.

A2: *Vitse-Admiral* Vladimir Filippovich Tributs; Red Banner Baltic Fleet, April 1942

Admiral Tributs commanded the Baltic Fleet for an extraordinarily long period, from April 1939 to 1947. With his surface ships trapped inside Kronstadt and Leningrad naval bases by Axis minefields, Tributs sent out his submarines to attack enemy shipping, while his Naval Aviation and Naval Infantry helped defend Leningrad. He wears the flag officers' black M40 peaked service cap, and an M34 dark blue service tunic with M40 flag officers' cuff rank insignia.

A3: *General'niy Komissar Gosudarstvennoy Bezopasnosti* Lavrenti Pavlovich Beriya; People's Commissar for Internal Affairs, 1942

A Transcaucasian security policeman since 1920, and Stalin's ally since 1926, Beriya was a member of the NKVD from 1934 until December 1945, and was deeply implicated in that brutal organization's worst excesses. He wears an M35 peaked service cap without special distinctions for a general officer; an M40 khaki tunic with M37 collar and cuff rank insignia, and M35 GUGB insignia on both upper sleeves; note that his M35 riding breeches have crimson piping.

B: NORTHERN & CENTRAL RUSSIA, 1942

B1: *General-Leytenant* Andrey Andreyevich Vlasov, 2nd Shock Army; Tikhvin, March 1942

The gifted commander of the doomed 2nd Shock Army in the Lyuban-Chudovo offensive east of Leningrad, Vlasov wears the M40 combined-arms (essentially, infantry) general officers' dress uniform: a grey lambswool *papakha* cap, a dress greatcoat with M40 insignia rank insignia, and (obscured here) a dress tunic and M35 dark blue breeches with red piping between general officers' double stripes. His M40 belt supports the M40 general officers' sword under the coat.

B2: Infantry subaltern, 257th Rifle Division; Kholm, January 1942

This platoon commander of the 948th Rifle Regiment, attacking German XXXIX Corps in the Kholm Pocket, wears the officers' M41 peaked field cap with an M41 subdued badge, an M31 sheepskin-lined winter coat, *valenki* felt boots and fur-lined leather gauntlets. His officers' field equipment comprises the M32 officers' leather field belt, with a holstered 7.62mm M1895 Nagant 'gas seal' revolver and binoculars, and the SM-1 gas mask in a canvas shoulder bag. He carries an early production PPSh-41 sub-machine gun.

Two Armoured Troops regimental command personnel confer in front of a camouflaged tank in 1942. The *politruk* senior lieutenant political officer (left) wears a non-standard black leather jacket, with three red enamel squares on black cloth collar patches piped red. The *polkovnik* regimental commander wears the M26 black leather greatcoat normally issued to Air Force flight crews; his black velvet collar patches, piped gold, bear a gilt tank branch badge and four red enamel rank bars. Both wear M40 fleece caps with M22 badges. (Tschakov Collection)

B3: *Krasnoarmeyets*, 214th Airborne Brigade; Vyazma, April 1942

The 214th Abn Bde dropped into Vyazma and fought there from January to May 1942. This paratrooper wears the cloth flying helmet and flight overalls, with (left breast) an M33 parachute qualification badge. Obscured here are Air Force branch badges on plain M41 collar patches. On his M38 enlisted field belt he carries a bayonet and a cloth magazine pouch for his section's DP-28 7.62mm Degytyarov light machine gun.

C: CAUCASUS & CRIMEA, 1942

C1: *Serzhant*, 63rd Cavalry Division, August 1942

This Cossack section commander in a mixed cavalry division wears an M36 Terek Cossack *kubanka* lambswool cap with M41 subdued badge. His M31 padded cavalry tunic has M41 khaki collar patches with subdued insignia, and he wears dark blue breeches piped blue. He has a binocular case and single M1917 ammunition pouch on his M38 belt, and a gas mask bag. He carries a Cossack riding whip, and is armed with a Cossack sword and a Mosin Nagant M38 cavalry rifle.

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C2: *Krasnoarmeyets*, 1st Mountain Detachment; Kluchorskiy Pass, November 1942

Although Red Army mountain rifle divisions were neither specially trained nor equipped for alpine warfare, several small alpine units were formed for the Caucasian campaign (July 1942–October 1943), including the company-sized 394th Rifle Division Special Detachment, the 1st Mountain Detachment, and the High Mountain Section on Mount Elbrus. This mountaineer wears the dark grey waterproof tunic and trousers, with M41 khaki collar patches with infantry branch insignia; an M40 fleece cap; sun goggles; thick woollen socks, and mountain boots with metal cleats. He carries an early production PPSh-41 SMG, with a PPD-40 magazine pouch and a canvas bag with two RGD-33 grenades on his M35 belt. He also carries a civilian alpenstock and mountaineering equipment.

C3: *Michman*, 9th Naval Infantry Brigade; Sevastopol, June 1942

This platoon commander wears mixed officers' and enlisted uniform items: an M39 peaked service cap with M34 officers' badge, and a striped vest under an M34 *bushlat* with M40 cuff rank insignia and a machinist's speciality badge, with M34 black trousers and ankle boots. His M24 belt supports a PPD-40 magazine pouch for his early production PPSh-41, and an RGD-33 grenade, and he has the usual gas mask bag.

D: SOUTHERN RUSSIA, 1942

D1: *Divizionniy Kommissar*, 40th Army; Kastornoye, June 1942

This divisional political officer serving on the River Don front wears the officers' M41 peaked field cap with general officers' badge, and the officers' M35 waterproof jacket with brown M41 general officers' buttons. He displays two M41 dark brown rank diamonds on M41 collar patches; the political officers' cuff star had been ordered removed from 1 August 1941. He wears M35 field breeches, and an officer's M32 field belt with the holster for his Nagant revolver.

D2: *Voenfel'dsher 2-go ranga*, 76th Rifle Division; Second Battle of Kharkov, May 1942

This medical subaltern working as a doctor's assistant wears the female uniform, comprising an M36 dark blue beret with an M41 subdued badge, and an M41 dress with brown buttons and M41 collar patches with brown branch and rank insignia; note the Red Cross armband on the left upper sleeve. She wears an officers' M32 field belt and marching boots, and carries a first-aid haversack.

D3: *Kapitan*, 207th Fighter Air Division; Voronezh, May 1942

This 2nd Air Army fighter pilot wears an unlined leather summer flying helmet with goggles. His M35 field shirt has brown buttons; it displays M41 collar patches with a dark green rank bar and an unofficial gilt branch badge. Hidden at this angle is the M24 left sleeve badge of a qualified VVS pilot. He wears M35 field breeches with riding boots, an officers' M38 field belt with a holstered pistol, and a PL-3M parachute harness.

Two soldiers of an engineer-sapper battalion fighting in urban ruins, 1943. Both are wearing M40 helmets, and M41 camouflage smocks and trousers. The sapper on the right has SN-42 body armour and carries a PPSh-41 submachine-gun, while his comrade from a flamethrower company is taking aim with the lance of his LPO-50 'light infantry flamethrower'. The SN-42 (*Stalynoi Nagrudnik* – 'steel vest'), introduced in 1942, comprised a khaki-painted iron breastplate and groin protector with a padded lining and collar, and a brown canvas belt. Compare with Plate G1. (Author's collection)

E: BATTLE OF STALINGRAD, 1942–43

E1: *Gvardii Starshiy Leytenant*, 16th Guards Tank Brigade; Tatsinskaya airfield, December 1942

This deputy commander of a tank company in 24th Tank Corps wears the M41 *pilotka* with dark brown M41 badge. His leather M34 tanker's jacket with brown buttons displays M41 collar patches, and is worn over an M41 field shirt also with subdued insignia; note the M42 Guards breast badge. An M34 padded tank crew helmet hangs from his M35 service belt.

E2: *Starshiy Serzhant*, 112th Rifle Division, November 1942

This 62nd Army sniper defending Stalingrad wears the M40 helmet, and an M41 hooded camouflage smock and trousers in light brown overprinted with dark brown 'cloud'-shaped patches. Beneath this he might wear an M41 field shirt with M41 collar patches with subdued insignia, and an obsolete white metal sniper's badge. He carries a Tokarev SVT-40 semi-automatic rifle with a telescope sight, and has a binocular case, leather Tokarev ammunition pouch, and probably a canvas telescope-sight bag on his M38 field belt.

E3: *Inzhener-Podpolkovnik*, 291st 'Kiev' Ground-Attack Air Division, November 1942

This Aviation Engineer serving with 16th Air Army wears the M40 Air Force officers' khaki and light blue service cap with M37 insignia. The rarely-worn officer's M41 dress tunic has branch-colour collar patches with M42 Aviation Engineering branch badges, M35 rank badges and cuff chevrons; note

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branch-colour piping on the collar, front edge and cuffs. He displays the Orders of Lenin, the Red Banner and the Red Star, and the M42 Aviation Engineers sleeve badge. His outfit is completed by M41 dress breeches and M40 dress belt. The 16th Air Army, supported by 8th Air Army, PVO, and seconded ADD units, fought successfully to impose the air blockade that doomed the German Sixth Army in Stalingrad.

F: NORTH & CENTRAL RUSSIA, 1943

F1: *Serzhant*, 45th Guards Rifle Division; Krasny Bor, 10 February 1943

This section commander in a 55th Army unit, participating in the unsuccessful assault on the Spanish 250th 'Blue' Division, wears the M40 snow camouflage smock and trousers over his M40 helmet, with a woollen balaclava. Under these he might typically wear an M41 *telogreika* quilted jacket bearing obsolete M41 collar patches and brown rank insignia, matching trousers, and *valenki* boots. He carries a PPSh-41 SMG, and probably uses his SM-1 gas mask bag to carry spare magazines.

F2: Partisan officer; Pripyat Marshes, Byelorussia, April 1943

The partisans hiding in the Byelorussian forests wore mixtures of German and Red Army, police and civilian clothing. This Red Army straggler, still wearing his officers' M35 service belt, has a civilian cap and trousers, an M41 quilted jacket with obsolete M41 collar patches and a proudly-displayed Order of the Red Star, and marching boots. He has captured a German MP40 sub-machine gun and canvas magazine pouches.

F3: *General-Mayor* Tankovykh Voysk, 33rd Army; Smolensk, August 1943

This Armoured Troops commander wears the M43 service uniform introduced on 13 January 1943. His M40 peaked service cap, reinstated as the M43, has a black velvet band, red piping, gold chin cords, and an M40 general officers' badge. The general officers' tunic has gilt M40 buttons, red collar and cuff piping, and gold braid service shoulder boards piped red, with a silver metal rank star (see footnote 1, page 3). His M35 service breeches have red piping and general officers' stripes.

G: KURSK & KHARKOV, 1943

G1: *Krasnoarmeyets*, Assault Engineer-Sapper Brigade; Central Front, Kursk Salient, July 1943

This élite assault engineer is wearing the M40 helmet and SN-42 body armour, with an M41 camouflage smock and trousers with dark green patches over the light green base colour. He carries an LP0-50 flamethrower, with a rifle-like lance, and triple tanks in a canvas backpack.

G2 & G3: *Yefreytor*, 183rd Rifle Division; Kharkov, August 1943

This Asiatic senior infantry private wears the M35 *pilotka* cap; an M43 summer field shirt with M40 brown buttons, and khaki field shoulder boards piped crimson, with a dark red rank bar; M41 summer breeches, puttees and ankle boots. All canvas and cloth items are khaki or greenish-khaki.

The front view **(G2)** shows the M39 backpack's canvas shoulder and chest straps, threaded through the canvas Y-straps, which are looped at the bottom around the M38 enlisted field belt under the brown leather M37 rifle ammunition pouches. The SM-1 gas mask bag hangs on the left hip; a cloth spare ammo pouch and an SVT-40 bayonet scabbard on the front of the hips. The canvas rifle ammo bandolier often carried over the left shoulder is omitted here; the M35 brown leather belt and M1917 ammunition pouches were also often still used.

The back view **(G3)** shows the greatcoat strapped around, and the M38 *plashch-palatka* cape/shelter-section strapped under, the M39 canvas backpack introduced in July 1939; it contains the khaki-painted messtin. A canvas carrier for RGD-33 grenades hangs behind the left hip, a light grey or khaki cloth-covered water bottle over the entrenching tool behind the right hip, and the canvas field bag is strapped to the back of the belt. The M36 light grey canvas knapsack, introduced in April 1936, was also often used, and the helmet could be hung from the backpack when on the march. The rifle is the SVT-40 semi-automatic.

H: UKRAINE & CAUCASUS, 1943

H1: *Gvardii Starshina 2-y stat'i*, Black Sea Fleet, June 1943

This petty officer wears the M34 seamen's uniform as modified from 15 January 1943. This rank now wore the M34 *bezkozirka* cap with the M22 badge. The summer jumper displays yellow M43 rank bars on white cloth shoulder patches, the signalman's sleeve badge, and an Order of the Red Star. The M24 belt supports M37 ammo pouches and the bayonet scabbard for his M1930 Mosin Nagant rifle, and he has the usual slung gas mask bag. The two orange stripes and orange edging to his black cap-ribbon, and the orange-and-black striped breast clasp, indicate his unit's Guards status.

H2: *Podpolkovnik*, 290th NKVD Rifle Regiment; Novorossiysk, October 1943

This battalion commander in the 18th Army assault on Novorossiysk wears the Red Army M43 service uniform with the NKVD M35 peaked service cap with M22 badge. The officers' service tunic has blue collar- and cuff-piping; the short-lived NKVD-pattern M43 'bottle-shaped' gold shoulder boards have royal-blue piping and centre stripes, an enamel infantry badge, and silver rank stars. His M35 officers' breeches are piped royal-blue. A cross brace supports his M35 service belt with holstered TT-33 pistol.

H3: *Krasnoarmeyets*, 3rd Penal Battalion, 13th Army; Kiev, November 1943

Infantry penal units were always in the front line, ordered to break stubborn enemy defences, to mount counter-attacks against superior forces, to act as decoys to draw fire from regular units, or to conduct dangerous reconnaissance patrols. Retreat or failure could mean execution by NKVD or SMERSH 'blocking detachments'. Life expectation in a mine-clearing penal battalion was even shorter – 'tramplers' were expected to clear minefields by marching across them. This *shtrafnik* is fortunate to be issued with a VIM-203 mine-detector. He wears the M35 enlisted *pilotka* sidecap with brown M41 badge, the M38 quilted jacket with M43 shoulder boards removed, quilted trousers, and *valenki* boots. On his M38 field belt are an SVT-40 bayonet and M37 pouches, and he has an SM-1 gas mask bag.

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